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THE PROPHETICAL WORKS OF EDWARD IRVING

EDITED BY HIS NEPHEW

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VOL. I.

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EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In a Series of Lectures

VOL. I.

PREFACE.

I HAD intended in this Preface to take a view of the progress of Revelation, from its beginning in the garden of Eden to its completion in the island of Patmos; and to exhibit the gradual and progressive evolution of those ideas which are in the Apocalypse wrought together into one comprehensive and complete system of truth: but I have not leisure at present for such an undertaking, and must postpone it until the completion of the whole work. These volumes contain a minute exposition of the first six chapters, except of a few verses. The sixth and seventh seals, whereof the materials are scattered up and down the Revelation, in chapters vi., vii., xv., xvi., xix., *and* xx., *I purpose to make the subject of another volume, which I will publish, when it is completed, uniform with these; and so continue from time to time, as God gives me opportunity.*

When I undertook these Lectures, my calculation was that within the compass of twelve lectures, the number which I delivered in Edinburgh, May 1829, *I should have been able to embrace a popular exposition of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. But as I proceeded, there arose in my mind a strong conviction that the thing which the Church needed was not so much another exposition, added to the multitude which she already possesseth, of this blessed book, as a practical exhibition of the infinite theological and moral treasures which it containeth; not so much another scheme of interpretation, or the scheme of former interpreters*

corrected by the new lights which have been cast upon the subject, as a demonstration of the excellence of the materials whereof it is composed, and their fitness for the edification of all saints. For it is beyond question, that the great body, both of Christian ministers and of Christian people, are deterred from studying and perusing this book by nothing more than a false notion that it is mysterious and cabalistical, and only for the edification of those who are learned. The Christian Church, in respect to it, are in the same state as the Church of Jerusalem was in respect to the Book of God in the days prophesied of by Isaiah: "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned," (*Isa.* xxix. 11, 12.) *Well knowing, from my own experience, how false and pernicious this notion is, and fully believing the blessing twice pronounced by God upon those who should read the Apocalypse, or manifestation of Jesus Christ,* (*Rev.* i. 3, xxii. 7,) *it hath been my endeavour to do my part to deliver the Church from this unworthy and erroneous estimate of a portion of the Word of God; from the loss she suffers, and from the guilt she contracts, in habitually undervaluing and neglecting it. To accomplish this most desirable end, I perceived that the means were, not so much by showing its object as a connected whole, as by exhibiting the excellence of all its parts; the preciousness of every name of God and of Christ, of every saying, of every figure, and almost of every word; and especially by showing the connexion of the book with the other parts of Scripture, and the light which it casts upon every book in the sacred canon. These views grew upon me as I proceeded; for in my extempore Lectures I had rather set myself to show forth the various aspects in which Christ is revealed, than the wonderful depth of Divine doctrine which the words of the Revelation contain. Then I fulfilled the office of one beholding the glories of Christ in these symbolical representations, and describing to my brethren what I beheld: afterwards, as I more and more deeply meditated the language of the record, I passed into the condition of the disciple*

drinking deeply at the fountain of his Master's wisdom, and desiring to impart the same plentiful supply to others.

As these purposes of doing good service for this wonderful book of God and for the Church grew in my mind, I felt it necessary to dwell more and more upon the very words of the Revelation, and to gather out the eternal truths of religion and morality which they contain. And so it came to pass, that upon the vision of the Churches, which in preaching occupied only two lectures, I have spent more than two-thirds of my whole labour. So far from regretting this, I desire devoutly to give thanks to Almighty God for having diverted me from my own purpose to one which I believe to be more for His glory and for the good of men. He has enabled me to set forth such a portraiture of our great Shepherd's character as I feel assured will bless both the churches and the ministers of the churches; while at the same time I have had ample opportunity of indirectly opening all the other parts of the Apocalypse.

It is now five years since I published my first work on prophetic subjects—entitled, "Babylon and Infidelity foredoomed"—expository of the Prophecies of Daniel and John in respect to the Christian nations and the world. Since which time there has been one continual series of events accomplishing the things therein laid down; and we seem at present standing on the brink of a great crisis, both in Church and State, which all men now begin to apprehend. This day, when I write, the Parliament of Great Britain is dissolved, in order to make way for another which may be more obsequious to the passions of the people; for it is an idle thing to talk now of any ruler in this nation but the popular voice, of which the Reformed Parliament will be the appropriate organ. A very short while will unfold very great events. The time is indeed at hand. In foreign nations we behold the popular voice expressing itself in revolutions, and organising itself into governments. And one thing is remarkable, that everywhere it prefers the monarchical form—the citizen king instead of the Christian king. When the last infidel Antichrist shall arise—the eighth head, which is also of the seven—there shall be ten kings, who will give their power unto him, in order to accomplish the destruction of the Whore of Babylon. Can it be that we

also shall have a citizen king, and fulfil the same destinies with the rest of the ten kingdoms? Things look very like it at present. I bless God that there is now a voice lifted up from the ministers of the Church, and that the eyes of the congregations are directed forward upon the coming events. God will be glorified by an intelligent Church, however few, in the midst of the fires.

It is now four years since I published the translation of Ben Ezra's book, entitled, "The Coming of the Lord in Glory and Majesty;" and I bless God when I behold the wonderful answer which His Church hath given to that voice from a distant land. She knew the voice of truth, though coming through a minister of the Roman Church, and received it with cordial welcome. In all the churches, and especially in the churches in Ireland, I have heard the voice, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Expositors of the Lord's coming have arisen on every side, and the land is filled with light. The doctrines of the Church begin to be more and more cleared in our sight; and with the light, life hath revived; and with the life, power; and with the power, gladness. This is to me by far the most hopeful sign of this land, that the Lord himself hath returned to the midst of us, with the light of knowledge and with the voice of preaching. We have awakened as out of a deep sleep. The walls of our Zion were almost stormed, but at length the watchmen are aroused, and the city is alarmed; and now comes the fearful contention between the powers of Infidelity and of Truth. This kingdom will stand or fall according as the one or the other shall prevail.

The work of which I now present the first portion is one of a larger scope than any which I have yet undertaken; being an endeavour to unfold the whole mystery of God, as it is expressed in this great revelation of Jesus Christ, which is the concentration of all the names, actions, and purposes of God into one. It is not to set forth my scheme, or to gainsay the schemes of others, but to open the deep things of God revealed in this portion of His Word—the historical applications in these volumes do not amount to the twentieth part of the whole;—it is not to prognosticate concerning time and place, but to apprehend and set forth the wisdom of God that I have undertaken, and so far completed,

this labour. The substance of the web is Eternal Truth, however fanciful some of the figures embroidered upon it may seem to be. Therefore I have entered into no questions with system-builders, because it is not as a system-builder that I am labouring, but as an expositor of the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which I believe to be the end of this book.

May the Lord accept this my labour, and bless it to His saints, and preserve me a faithful labourer until the day of His appearing!

EDWARD IRVING.

NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH,
22*d April* 1831.

THE WARNING OF THE CHURCH.

A PARABLE.

THEY tell of one of England's noblest peers,
Who sought within the shades of humble life
Retreat from sorrow, and for comfort found,
What for man's comfort was by God ordain'd,
A woman of a tender, loyal heart;
Whom for his wedded wife he joyful took,
Nor aught reveal'd of his name and line,
But brought her, all unconscious, to his home,
And there did plant her, partner of his state.
But, ah! she loved him over-much, and thought
His home dishonour'd in his lowly wife,
And, like a flower transplanted, droop'd, and died.
—But, thankless Church, thou 'rt ready to reject
The Son of God, because in lowliness
He came to woo thee, lowly; laid aside
His heavenly glory, and in mortal weeds
Found access to thy prison, all in thine ear
To pipe soft strains of consolation, meet
T' assuage thy sufferings, and thy love to win;
Then broke thy bonds, thy captors captive led;
And by His Father crowned Lord of all,
Sent thee His Holy Spirit from on high,—
Pledge of His love, of thy inheritance
The earnest;—call'd thee in His throne to sit,
And placed upon thy head creation's crown.
But, ah! strange mock! thy pride is sore displeased
Because He came in mortal, sinful flesh,
From sin and sickness sore to raise its state
And high enthrone it in the height of heaven:
As kings are sometimes wont, in their own guise
To woo and wed fair maids, who to a crown
Did ne'er aspire, nor dream of royal love.
—If thus, O graceless, thankless, heartless Church!
Thou spurn that meanness, which was undergone
To purchase thy redemption: Fear, then, oh fear,
Lest unto thee it fare as heretofore
To Michal, David's wife, who scorn'd her lord

For dancing with the throng before God's Ark,
And for her cold and saucy pride was writ
Thenceforward childless, and was doom'd to see
Another wife advanced into her room,
Herself cast out, though daughter of a king;
A base adult'ress raised into her room.
So thou shalt be cast out, O Gentile Church,
Born to a kingdom, for thy saucy pride,
And the adult'ress bond-wife, Jacob's seed,
Shall sit, and share in earth King David's throne!

THE INVOCATION.

COME NOW TO ME ONCE MORE, LORD OF MY REASON,
PRINCE OF LIGHT, MOST GLORIOUS SON OF GOD;
COME, HELP ME TO UNFOLD IN FIT DISCOURSE
THOSE MARVELLOUS VISIONS OF THY COMING
WRIT IN TH' APOCALYPSE. IN THY RIGHT HAND,
WHERE IS THE HIDING OF THY POWER, I REST,
THY WILLING TOOL; EMPLOY ME AS THOU WILT.
I AM AN ANGEL OF THY CHURCH—GIVE ME
MY CHARGE, GREAT BISHOP; A STAR—ENLIGHTEN ME,
AMIDST THE DARKNESS OF THIS CLOUDY NIGHT,
TO STRUGGLE THROUGH THE WRACK BREW'D IN THE HEAVENS
BY SATAN, PRINCE O' TH' AIR, AND GUIDE THY SAINTS.
FAIN WOULD I KEEP SOME RAY OF HOPE ABOVE
THE HORIZON, LIKE SOME LONELY WATCHMAN,
WHO, FAR OFF AT SEA, DOTH TRIM HIS BEACON LIGHT
TO LEAD LOST SEAMEN TO THEIR HAVEN OF REST.

Be not cast down, my soul; my heart,
Be stirred up with love;
My mind, dwell ever in that Light
Which cometh from above.

For unction of the Holy One,
My God, I look to thee;
That I may rightly know all things
Which in thy counsel be.

And what I know, that I may tell
With words of heavenly grace,
Do thou, O Word, inform my lips;
For I do seek thy face.

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THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

LECTURE I.

THE NAME, AUTHORITY, SUBSTANCE, AND SANCTIONS OF THE BOOK.

REV. i. 1–3.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

IT is not from any conceit of supernatural wisdom or spiritual gifts, beyond what any other minister of Christ may aspire to and ought to possess; nor is it in the proud ambition of making all mysteries plain, although we believe that this, and this only, is the province of the evangelical teacher; still less is it out of any curiosity about, or speculative research into, future things, but because we have experienced in our own souls the blessedness promised unto "him that readeth the words of the prophecy of this book;" and because we think we have received some further insight into the object of God in giving it, the method of its structure, and the application of its predictions, and would fain communicate of our good things unto others, that they may partake of our comfort and joy;—this, and no other, so far as we know our own mind, is our motive for undertaking the most grave and responsible office of presenting to the Church an exposition of the Apocalypse or Revelation of Jesus Christ.

And, forasmuch as we do consult for Thy glory, O Almighty God! and for the good of Thy Church, O our Lord Jesus Christ! and

would be wholly under Thy guidance, O Thou Holy Spirit of Truth! we do most humbly and earnestly pray that our souls, being filled "with power, and with love, and with a sound mind," might be enabled to declare, with meekness and wisdom, the deep things of Thy counsel contained in this portion of Thy holy word.

Let me, then, endeavour in these lectures to speak to my brethren in Christ Jesus with sincerity and truth, as one man ought to speak to his brother-man, and with wisdom and authority, as a minister of Christ, to the flock of God; endeavouring, as much as in me lies, to cast away the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, and to remember that I stand before my Judge, before whom also you stand. In His sight, therefore, I make no scruple to declare before you all, at the outset of these lectures, that my reason for undertaking such a task, in this the chief city of our Church at this time, is simply, that I believe this book of the Revelation is not perused and studied as it ought to be. Into the cause of which neglect it is not so much my office to search, nor yet to censure or rebuke that indifference to the contents of this book which has come over the preachers and ministers of the Christian Church; as it is my part, and belongs to the office of the workman of God to do what in him lies to remove the evil over which I lament: and this I will do, in the strength of Divine grace, and by His help whom I serve, even the great Head of the Church, whose minister I am, for the preaching of His word unto all people. With humility, therefore, with distinctness, and with simplicity, will I endeavour to lay before the Church all my treasures, new and old, according to the gift of utterance which the Spirit may be pleased to bestow upon me, praying always for an increase of knowledge and of utterance to make known to you all the treasures of the riches of this book, which is forbidden to be sealed, and whereof the perusal is blessed with an express benediction of God: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

In this discourse, which is intended as introductory to the whole series, I will lay before you a comprehensive idea and general view of the precious things contained in the Apocalypse, that in your leisure and retirements you may pursue the study, and anticipate me in the daily exposition of it; and this I will do according to the following method:—First, I shall discourse of the name contained in the first three words of the book, "*the Revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Secondly, Of the particulars of its transmission unto us, contained in the first two verses of the book, which I shortly term "its authority."

Thirdly, Of the substance, and the method, and the contents of it. And, lastly, I will discourse of the divine injunction which God has given to enforce on us the perusal of it, and the encouragement which He has held out to the ministers of the gospel to expound it with all diligence; and to the people to give earnest heed to those preachers who gird up their loins to obey the divine commandment. These four heads—the name, the authority, the method, and the sanctions of this book—I will now endeavour to lay before you in order.

I. The name of the book is, *the Revelation of Jesus Christ.* I have reason to believe that this expression is not generally understood, or rather is commonly misunderstood, as if it were meant to convey no more than that Jesus Christ revealed it. Now, if this be all, there is no distinctness in the title or name wherefore one, in preference to the other books of Scripture, should be entitled "the Revelation of Jesus Christ;" for all the books of Scripture are alike the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God, the Light of the Father which lighteth every man. In this sense, all the writings of St Paul are revelations of Jesus Christ; whereof he says that he received them not by man, neither was taught them, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The same may be said of all the other books of Scripture, which Christ revealed or inspired by His Spirit in His servants; as Peter declareth, that they speak by the Spirit of Christ which was in them. Therefore I say, that if this be all that is signified, there would be nothing in the title wherefore it should be the characteristic name of this book.

But, besides this, I observe, as to the fact, that it did not come to John by revelation of Jesus Christ; for it was not Jesus Christ that revealed it to him, but an angel that showed or represented it to him by signs, as in this same verse it is written, "Which God gave unto Jesus Christ, to show unto His servant things which must shortly come to pass." These words give us to know that this book was given to Jesus Christ by the Father, in order to show the contents thereof to His servants. And what method does Christ take to show it to God's servants? He sends His messenger, His angel, and signifies it to His servant John. So John did not receive the communication directly from Christ, but he received it through the medium of one proceeding from Christ. He received it not in the way of revelation or inspiration, but in the way of outward demonstration. It was *shown* to him by his angel, and repeatedly in this book is that angel spoken of, to whom John did twice, in the height of gratitude and satisfaction, offer worship, but the angel would not suffer himself to be worshipped. I am inclined, therefore, to doubt the commonly-

received interpretations of the name, as if it merely signified that Jesus Christ revealed the contents of the book, because we always find that a Scripture name doth express the substance of the thing named, as all the names of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ do testify; and even those names which the authority or use of the Church hath given to the books of Scripture have in them a great propriety and peculiar appropriateness. For example, Genesis signifies the generation of things; Exodus, the out-going of the children of Israel from the house of bondage. But when God himself appropriates a name—for example, "the gospel," or "good news"—it then never fails to contain the very essence of that which is named. And seeing the Holy Ghost hath chosen to entitle this book "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," we may never doubt that there is something contained under that name beyond this which belongs to all Scripture in common, that it is revealed by Jesus Christ the Word, and which therefore cannot serve to distinguish one book of Scripture from another.

These reasons are sufficient to make us hesitate concerning the commonly-received interpretation of the name or title, and do justify a further inquiry into the subject. And when we go to examine the proper meaning and common use of the words "Apocalypse, or revelation, or manifestation of Jesus Christ," we find almost invariably that they signify not *Jesus Christ revealing*, but *Jesus Christ revealed:* except in one doubtful case, they never signify Jesus Christ the Revealer, but always the revelation, manifestation, appearing, or coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when, from being hidden as He now is, He shall become once more and for ever revealed in the glory of His Father. There are, I suppose, not fewer than ten or twelve instances in which this expression "revelation of Jesus Christ" occurs in the New Testament, either exactly in the form in the text, or else in some other form and construction, and with only one apparent but not real exception, doth it always signify Jesus Christ the Revealed, and not once Jesus Christ the Revealer. To this solitary exception, (as it is thought to be,) which is found in Gal. i. 12, let us attend first: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." This passage is commonly taken as signifying that Jesus Christ revealed the gospel to the apostle by direct inspiration or inward working of the Spirit; which, also, I was myself disposed to admit: but a more patient study of the passage leads me to prefer the common, and I may say universal, meaning of the expression, revelation of Jesus Christ, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but (had it) through the manifestation of Jesus Christ;"

for straightway he proceeds to narrate the appearing or manifestation of Christ on the way to Damascus, which, in verse 16, he calleth God's revealing His Son in him; signifying, as I understand, that contemporaneous with the outward manifestation of His Son in the brightness of the heavens, God gave to the apostle an inward manifestation of Him in the spirit according to the promise, John xiv. 23: but in both cases it was Christ that was revealed or manifested, and the Father who revealed or manifested Him; Him the subject of the revelation, not the agent revealing, which, by essential propriety, whenever the Son is the subject, belongeth to the Father, who alone giveth faith. "The Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to our souls." In this passage, therefore, there is no support whatever for the idea that Christ is the revealer of Himself, but every support to the idea that He is the revealed one, and the Father acting by the Holy Ghost the revealer. But though this passage had given support to the idea that Jesus Christ is the revealer, it would have availed nothing in the case before us, where the manner of communication is not by revelation of Jesus Christ, but by demonstration of an angel. God gives Jesus Christ the account of His own manifestation or appearance; He gives it in charge to Him for the use of all His servants; Jesus Christ gives it to an angel, and the angel shows it out to John, who writes it to the churches,—a method of communication quite opposed to the notion that Jesus Christ caused it to spring up in the apostle's mind by inspiration, or whispered it into his ear by voice of speech. And when we go into details, and see what the book is made up of, we find that it is Christ revealed, now as all-glorious Head of the Church in the midst of the golden candlesticks, now as the Lamb slain living in heaven and instated by His Father in the possession of universal power and inheritance, opening the sealed book and working wonderful effects in the earth, &c. Everywhere it is Christ revealed, and not Christ revealing; so that the substance of the book, as well as the style of its name or title, do repel the notion of Christ revealing, even if such a notion were found in that passage of the Galatians, which I have argued above it is not. Now this apparent but not real exception being taken out of the way, all is clear; and to every scholar, yea, to any unlearned but sound-minded man, I will submit the question for a decision, after having referred to some of the passages where the expression in the text "Apocalypse of Jesus Christ" is used, for it is an expression of very frequent use in the New Testament. In the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (i. 7) it is thus written, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The words in the original are

exactly the same as the title of our book, waiting for *the revelation* of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the doctrine taught us is, "Ye come behind in no gift" which the Church hath received from Christ in virtue of His ascension; and ye wait for your perfection in the day of His revelation, when we shall come with Him in the full participation of His kingdom and glory. Again, turn to the Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, (i. 6, 7:) "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels;"—literally, "in the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," in His being manifested, in His coming unto the earth from heaven, which we all believe in, though we may perhaps differ in respect to some of the circumstances attendant thereupon. Another advent hath always been maintained by the Church; and never otherwise than as a great fundamental doctrine of the orthodox faith hath it been held, that Christ is to come again in person to judge the quick and the dead. This event called the manifestation or revelation of Jesus Christ in the passage now before us, bears the same characters as in the Book of the Revelation, for in both doth Jesus Christ, with His mighty angels, come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel; who are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. I next turn your attention to that passage, 1 Pet. i. 7. You may read from the third verse: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, [it is reserved in heaven now, but is] ready to be revealed or manifested in the last time," when the New Jerusalem cometh down from heaven: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season [if need be] ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing [revelation] of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i. 6, 7.) Here it is declared, that in the assured faith and hope of that heavenly inheritance which is to be revealed, the Church endureth all fiery trials and grievous losses which God sendeth for her probation, that she may come out of the fire like silver seven times refined, glorious and bright, and honourable to God, in the day when Christ shall be manifested with

all His saints to be admired in all them that believe. In that day of the manifestation (revelation) of the sons of God, (Rom. viii. 19,) when we receive the redemption of the body, (ver. 23,) all creation is delivered from its bondage into their glorious liberty. So full is the Apostle Peter of this grand revelation or manifestation, that he makes a third reference to it in verse 13 of the above-quoted chapter, as the bearer of especial grace and favour to the Church: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now, brethren, as the subject of discourse is large, I do not bring forward other instances to the same effect, but simply lay it down, that, without any exception, this expression, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the cognate or kindred expressions which occur in the New Testament, are used of the coming, or appearing, or manifestation of Christ. They all bear the sense of "Jesus Christ the Revealed," and not in any instance can signify "Jesus Christ the Revealer."

In all these instances, then, of holy Scripture, the expression Revelation of Jesus Christ signifies His future manifestation, His future coming—being taken in the passive sense, Christ the Revealed, not Christ the Revealer. If this be the proper meaning of it in the passage before us, as sound criticism would conclude, then, standing as it doth for the title of any book, it would signify that that book was given for the purpose of informing the Church concerning the time and manner and circumstance of our Lord's glorious Epiphany. As Paul was delegated to inform the Church concerning the mystery of the Gentiles being fellow-heirs with the saints, which he received according to revelation (Eph. iii. 3)—"By revelation he made known unto me the mystery,"—so John is delegated to make known unto the Church the further mystery of the manifestation of Jesus Christ after the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in; and the title of the book should not be the Revelation of John the divine, but the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In either sense this ought to be the title of the book, whether you understand it to be His manifestation or that which He revealed. Which of these two, the active or passive, ought to be taken as the true sense of the words is not only, as I think, clear from the common use of the New Testament, but from certain passages of the book itself. For example, the opening of it, (i. 7,) "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." And the conclusion of it, (xxii. 17,) "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." Ver. 20—"He who testifieth these things saith,

Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Now if the book did not concern the coming of the Lord, why would it thus open and conclude with solemn invocations for Him to come? But if the subject of it be to lay open the time, manner, and circumstances of His revelation, then it is well opened and concluded with a solemn averment from Christ's own mouth, that He would quickly come, and a glad response from the prophet's mouth, that He would so quickly come. There is another passage in the book which casts light upon the title; it is written in chap. x. 7—"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." This is the only part of the book where a mystery is spoken of; but a revelation always implies a mystery, and in the very name Revelation the idea of a mystery is contained all throughout. The perfecting of the mystery, therefore, in the days of the seventh angel, when time shall be no longer, is, I take it, nothing else than that the thing taken in hand to be opened in this book is then completed. Now, if we look at the context of that passage, we find that it contains the descent of Christ from heaven to earth, and His taking possession of earth and sea in the name of the eternal God who created them. The mystery, then, which is perfected, is the mystery of His manifestation; and this book is the evolution of the mystery, is the steps and progression of the Divine purpose to reveal His Son with power and great glory, which is not fully perfected until the seventh angel shall have blown his blast. Jehovah said unto our Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This book contains the acts of Jehovah by which Christ's enemies are made His footstool, after which Christ sitteth no longer at His right hand, but cometh to rule in the midst of his subjugated enemies. There was a long time to intervene before the grand object of the Church's faith and hope was to appear. None of the apostles were permitted to know the times and seasons; but the Spirit in them did ever witness to the coming and kingdom of the Lord, whereof they preached the good news; and the same Spirit did seal their disciples until that day of the redemption, and did become unto them for an earnest of that inheritance; but, until the great disclosure of this book, there were no marks or signs by which the progression and the approach of that great hope of the world might be recognised. God who changeth not, and the Holy Spirit who speaketh only the unchanging truth of God, had from the beginning conceived, fixed, and determined the times and the seasons; but the mystery thereof He openeth according to the fitness of the times, and consistently

with the responsibility and discipline of the Church. For example, He did not tell unto Jacob when he went down unto Egypt that he and his children were going down to the house of bondage, although He had told this to Abraham from the beginning of the covenant; neither did He tell to the children of Israel that they were to wander forty years in the wilderness, and perish there when He made the covenant with them at Sinai, but did reserve this communication till they had ten times contradicted and provoked Him, and then it was told as a judgment. In like manner He did not tell unto the Jewish people that for two thousand years the Gentiles were to possess Abraham's covenant when they were cast out, but did reserve the burdensome tidings till after they should have rejected Christ and His apostles. And as in all these former instances, the communication of evil tidings unto the Church was reserved until the evil had been revealed in her, for which they were announced as the chastisement; so, in this last instance of a communication to the Church, it was not until she had much offended God with her backslidings, heresies, and schisms, as we see in the seven epistles to the Asiatic churches, that the Lord gave forth this book which postponed for a long season, or rather revealed the certain and appointed time at which the Lord is to appear. In the Acts and Epistles, which are the only documents of the primitive Church, the coming of Christ is the great, and I may say only, object of the Church's prospective faith. But there it appears as a mystery—glorious, but undefined—full in their view, but undetermined in its distance—the measure of which, and the fearful things which were to happen to the Church before and upon His appearing, were reserved for communication until they could be communicated in the way of a judgment and vexation unto the Church for her many provocations of God. In this way it is that the unfoldings of God's purpose are made consistent both with the discipline of His Church and the responsibility of every man. And what I have said with respect to the revelation of the purpose by inspired men, I say likewise of the opening and preaching thereof by uninspired but gifted ministers, (I mean gifted with the gifts of the Spirit, communicated to the faithful minister by the laying on of hands.) The matter preached to any generation of the Church, while it is the constant truth of God, consisteth of things new as well as old, whereof the new brought out of the treasury do bear a certain proportion in the way of discipline and responsibility to that generation of the Church unto which they are communicated.

That this is the true account of the name and title of the book I have no doubt. It is a point which I have perfectly ascertained, and

upon which I am fully convinced; not indeed without much examination, and I do not wish you to receive it without the like consideration. They misrepresent me who say that I dogmatise and arrogate authority beyond my place, as if I spake in my own name, and not in the name of Christ. It is not good so to withstand and vilify a brother, as I hear that some of them do, speaking maliciously, or else ignorantly. Boldly indeed I do speak, (adding to my faith boldness,) because I speak from the heart the things which I have believed; my conscience also bearing me witness. But I am always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in me with meekness and with fear; nor do I wish to overbear any man's conscience. Therefore, when I state to you that this name and title of the book signifies Jesus Christ revealed, Jesus Christ manifested, I leave it for you to consider those passages which I have read, and so to come to the same conclusion by the blessing of God and the teaching of His Spirit.

The name of the book is therefore the opening of Christ, the disclosing, the unveiling, the discovering of Christ. Now before going any farther, I shall draw one or two inferences from this first head. If the intention of the book be the unveiling or uncovering of Jesus Christ, it certainly must be a book of the very last importance for men to study; for what is there that concerns a Christian but Jesus Christ?—for in Him is hid all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. I know nothing of myself, I can know nothing of myself, I hope nothing of myself. I cannot say I know God, but in Jesus Christ. I know nothing of God, but according as I see Him in the person of Jesus Christ. I know nothing that is to come, or that is past, or that exists around me, but through the same interpretation which Jesus Christ is of God's fulness; for all things were created by Him, and all things were created for Him, and in Him all things consist. If, then, the person and offices of Jesus Christ be that which all preaching, and all hearing, and all understanding and research into Scripture are conversant with, surely, when God has written a book expressly for the purpose of unveiling and discovering Him, it is a very bold thing for any person to say that book is not profitable for men to search into; that the book is so difficult that it is in vain for men to search into it. For any one thus to speak is to say that God undertook a thing for the good of the Church, but failed in His good intent. He gave it to Jesus Christ to show it unto His servants, and yet His servants have no profit or pleasure from it. For you to say that this book doth not unveil Christ, but rather hide Him, for you to doubt of its profitableness, for you to believe that it is a matter of uncertainty whether you will derive knowledge of Christ from it, is as much as to say that

God has been defeated in His object; that God has not attained His wish; that He was trying to unveil Christ unto man, but it is a very doubtful thing whether He has unveiled Him or not to any one. To entertain such doubt, such unbelief, and to follow such practices, is, I say, very irreverent distrust, and wicked disobedience of God. And here I may observe in passing—for I always love to confirm what I say by my own experience—that let other persons think and state what they please, truth constrains me to declare that I have got more insight into the person and offices of my blessed Lord from the study of this book, than from the study of all Scripture besides: in very truth, it has proved to me the unveiling and discovering of the Lord Jesus Christ. To me it has been the gospel, not indeed of His flesh, (the gospel of the days of his flesh being written in the four Evangelists,) but it has been the gospel of His glory: it has discovered to me my Lord glorified, and shown Him to my soul as the great Bishop of souls; and as the great Head of the Church, for the consolation of the Church, it has shown Him also to my flock; and to myself the minister over them, it hath shown Him as the universal Bishop. And to many who are not of my flock, I have been enabled to demonstrate out of this book, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath been exalted of God to be the Prince of the kings of the earth; who doth Himself, or the Father for Him doth, bring about all the revolutions of the kingdoms, to the end of reducing all rule and dominion under the man Christ Jesus, of putting all enemies under His feet. Here, also, we have seen Him setting destruction in array against the apostasy of Rome; and while we behold infidelity advancing with giant strides to the supremacy of the kingdoms, we can look on undismayed, because we see herein written that it shall speedily go into destruction, being overcome by the Lamb, and those who are with Him, who are called, and faithful, and chosen. Truly hath it proved itself in my experience, and the experience of my people, to be a full disclosure and complete opening of Jesus Christ, whose work, since His ascension until this day, is here discovered; and His better work, when He shall come again in the glory of His power, to be honoured in His saints, to deliver the world from its oppressors and destroyers, and to bring it at length to pass that all nations shall be blessed in Him, and all shall call Him blessed. I do assure you, that it has been to me and my flock the book of the Gospel of Christ in risen glory; as the four Gospels are of Christ in fallen flesh. The Gospels are the revelation of Christ's work in the days of His flesh. The Apocalypse is the revelation of all things which He is doing in heaven. In the one I have seen God manifested in the man humbled: I have seen in

the other God manifested in the man exalted. I have seen in the one God manifested by Christ present on the earth amongst men: I have seen in the other God manifested by Christ working in the Spirit, though absent from amongst men. Likewise, God to be manifested in Christ's coming to the earth again, and in all the mysteries of power and glory which He is then to bring into accomplishment. So much doth the very name and title of this book commend it to the Church. And now we come to speak of the manner of its transmission from God to the Church, or its authority.

II. This head of discourse includeth all that is contained in the first two verses, being, First, Its origin from God: "God gave it unto Jesus Christ." Secondly, The end of His giving it: "to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Thirdly, The method of its communication; "He sent and signified it, [sending He signified it,] by His angel to His servant John." And, lastly, A description of John's identity: "who bare witness of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, and all the things which he saw." These are the four circumstances connected with the transmission from God unto the Church of this book, whose title is, "The Revelation or Manifestation of Jesus Christ." And to each of these particulars it will be necessary that we should attend a little in order.

1. The revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave unto Him.* Is Christ himself not God? Yes, He is God, the eternal Son of God, God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever. How is it then said that God gave it unto Him? Is not Jesus Christ God? is not His very name Jesus, Jah or Jehovah, the I AM, and Hoshea the Saviour, the I am the Saviour? And yet the language is no way qualified, but simple and plain language; God gave it unto Him. This, therefore, wanteth interpretation. Understand you, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, that the Son of God, though God when he became man, came into the very condition of man; not ceasing to be God, but acting through the faculties of man, with the feelings and the knowledge of a man. He came into the number of our family, and was tempted in all points like as we are. As it was with His feeling, so it was with His knowledge; as it was with the senses of His body, so it was also with the faculties of His reasonable soul: He took unto Himself a true body and a reasonable soul. He did not take these that they might lie beside Him unoccupied, or that they might be used now and then as it pleased Him, or pleased Him not. Those ideas which some men entertain, as if Christ now acted in one nature, and now in another, I regard as flat Nestorianism, which

makes two persons to be in Him. He is one person, the person of the Son of God, and every act of that person must include both natures, but never in either nature be perfected. If He did act in the Divine nature anything without the human nature, then there is a person standing in the Divine nature alone; for that which is distinctive of a person is a complete action, feeling, or word. If, again, He did any act in the human nature alone, where is the divine? This ignorant, though common way of speaking, as if now you have an act of the human nature, and now of the divine nature, doth make a person of each, and so ye bring in the false doctrine of Nestorius, who asserted that Christ had two persons, instead of two natures in one person." These remarks are necessary to the understanding of the thing declared in the text, that God gave this revelation to Jesus Christ, who in becoming man truly came into limitation of the knowledge, feelings, and complete nature of man; self-contracted, self-humbled, self-emptied of His glory, that He might show His love to human nature in its lowest forms, and redeem it out of its most miserable conditions; and, through the agency of men redeemed, might bring the universe into blessedness, and fix it there for ever. Agreeably hereto, the Scripture recordeth that the Lord Jesus Christ grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man. That human reason which He took, He did inform with His personality of the eternal Word; and receiving the Holy Ghost from the Father, in answer to His faith, He did instruct and support the human nature through all the stages of its existence, which was upholden wise, faithful, and true, through the influence of the Holy Ghost.* And thus every action begun in the Godhead of the Son of man, proceeded into the manhood, and out of the manhood passed complete. So that the creature is fully capable of apprehending God in human nature; while, at the same time, Christ in the divine nature is wholly incomprehensible; out of which He ever condescended from His dignity, from His infinite vastness, from His incomprehensibility, into this creature condition, in order that He might make God intelligible through a body. And this is the way in which the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in a body. So that the first part of His acting, that done in the Godhead, passeth all understanding. We cannot know the love, the condescension of God's coming to act in the human nature: but the acting in the human nature, perfectly harmonising with the Divine will, we are enabled to comprehend the love and the goodness, and the other affections of the Godhead; and we are enabled to walk in that way which He loveth, and to have that mind in us which was

* See Westminster Confession, ch. viii. § 3.

also in Christ Jesus. There is great confusion in the way in which they speak of the actions both of God and of Christ in these times; shrinking from and shunning the language of the Trinity, in which alone a work of God can be truly expressed. And therefore I deem it good thus early in these discourses to express in one sentence the process of a Divine purpose, until it become a realised thing. The Godhead of the Father, infinite and incomprehensible, communicates to the Godhead of the Son, also infinite and incomprehensible, by means of the Holy Ghost, also infinite and incomprehensible, that purpose which He would have performed: the Son, assenting thereto in His Divine nature, which is one of substance and of will with the Father, doth proceed to perform that which the Father hath communicated to Him. And to this end He emptieth Himself out of His Divine nature, and passeth into the human nature, where He findeth Himself a very man, with man's very limitations: and there acting faith, as a man He receiveth the Holy Ghost given by the Father unto His human nature, and consenting to act through the same; by whom He in His human nature doth extend His human will, ever harmonious with His Divine will, to the utmost bound and limit of God's creation. Wherever the person of the Father willeth to work, there the person of the eternal Son in human nature, or the Christ of God, doth, by the Holy Ghost acting as the Spirit of Christ, perform the work which the infinite and incomprehensible Godhead of the Father had originated in Himself.

So much for the general principle. And now, in order to explain the particular case of an increase of Christ's knowledge, which is now before us, turn to the thirteenth chapter of Mark, and see what he says, verse 32: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." What is the day and the hour here spoken of? It is the day and the hour of His revelation, His coming, or appearing. Ver. 26: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory." Ver. 32: Now "of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Here the Divine Person, Christ, declares that, when He was on the earth, He knew not the day or the hour of the coming of the Son of man. Now recollect, that the coming of the Son of man is the same as the revealing of Jesus Christ. The words "revealing of Jesus Christ," in those passages which are quoted above, is translated "the coming or the appearing of the Son of man;" so that here we have a declaration of His ignorance during the days of His flesh, as to that one matter. And here in our text it is declared that He received the knowledge of it from the Father; that He re-

ceived it from God; that God gave it to Him. We see, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, that when our blessed Lord was with us in the days of His flesh, His humility is shown in this no less than in other things, that His knowledge was under a veil, under the veil of the flesh, under the limitation of that form of being which He was then possessed of, having only the limited compass of flesh mortal; but when He ascended on high, and received His glorified body of flesh immortal, when He received the promise of the Holy Ghost from the Father to bestow on His disciples, He likewise received by the Holy Ghost further lights and communications, which He doth bestow on the Church through means of the holy apostles. It was from Christ that the holy apostles received their new revelations; and Christ himself received them from God; and, receiving them from God, He received them from His own substance. Think not that Jesus Christ is another substance from God, or that God is another substance from Jesus Christ: remember that Jesus Christ is one of the Persons in the Godhead: and when He says that God gave it to Him, it merely signifies that Jesus Christ, having humbled Himself to the likeness of man, received from the Godhead those communications which the Godhead was pleased to give Him; and did grow up, as it is said, in wisdom and in favour with God and man. After His resurrection, He received new communications; and one of these is the substance of this book.

In the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, our blessed Lord, after He ascendeth unto, and sitteth at the right hand of His Father, is represented as receiving all His information from the Father, and not from His own Divine nature; no otherwise, indeed, than He received it upon the earth, where He increased in wisdom, and was guided in understanding, through means of the holy Scriptures, just as all His disciples are. For example: in Isaiah viii. 17, 18, which we have Paul's authority (Heb. ii.) for referring unto Christ, He representeth Himself as waiting His Father's time and pleasure during the long night of Jacob's darkness and Zion's desertion. So also in Isaiah xlix., which we have apostolic authority (2 Cor. vi.) for referring to the same time, we have Christ under the name of Jacob, and in the language of Jacob complaining that the wife of His love, Rachel, the Jewish Church, had not been given up unto Him, and that He had spent His labour for nought; whereupon Jehovah, His Father, maketh known to Him that He purposed first to give unto Him her for whom He had not laboured, to wit, the Gentile Church; and further, He revealeth the other mystery, that after their day of salvation He would give Him for a covenant of the (Jewish) people to establish the earth, (that it should not again

be shaken, Heb. xii. 27,) and to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, (the redemption of the purchased inheritance, until which we are sealed by the Holy Ghost, Eph. i. 14.) These two mysteries, I say, of the calling of the Gentiles first, and of His after manifestation to be the glory of Israel, Christ received from His Father after His ascension. In the days of His flesh He knew of them only as a Prophet, and He made them known only in proportion to the prophetic measure; and therefore He said, that of the day and the hour of His coming no man knew, not even the Son, but the Father only. But when He ascended up on high, He received them as gifts for His Church. And for communicating them unto His Church He chose men to whom He might reveal them. Paul was the chosen vessel for conveying the mystery of their vocation unto the Gentiles: John was the chosen vessel for conveying the mystery of His coming unto all the Church.

Now, dearly beloved brethren, think not evil, neither refuse to look at these things, as if we disparaged the divinity of Christ, while we thus set forth the economy of the Divine purpose, according to the order of its communication to and forth-setting by Christ. One accession was when He ascended up on high, and received in His manhood that glory and dignity which He now possesses. No one of you refuses to look at, and to believe that He ascended up into glory out of His humility, to honour out of disgrace; and that after He passed through death He received an immortal and impassable body, was seated at the right hand of the Father in glory, and now reigneth with all the attributes of the Father, who condescendeth to act as it were under and for the Son, who heretofore having glorified the Father, is now glorified of the Father. No one hesitates to believe that Christ did receive such glory of God on the day of His ascension; that He did then receive the promise of the Spirit, of which it is expressly said by John, "This spake he of the Spirit; for the Spirit was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and the Apostle Peter, in the beginning of the Acts, says, "This is what is spoken of Joel the Prophet, . . . now Christ is ascended up on high, and hath received the promise of the Spirit, and shed down that which ye now see and hear." If, then, Christ did receive advancement of glory and enlargement of power in the Holy Spirit, as He himself also declares, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," what difficulty can any one have in believing that He received new revelations also,—for the making known of which He used two chosen instruments, one the Apostle Paul, to communicate the calling of the Gentile into the union of the body of Christ; and the other the Apostle John, to communicate what is revealed in this

Book of the Apocalypse? And I know of no other new revelations except these two. Not only is this account of the matter necessary for the unfolding of the meaning of the words, "God gave it to him;" which beareth that He had not the knowledge before, as He himself declareth in the passage quoted from Mark; and likewise for the better understanding of Christ's humiliation, and the acting of God through Christ, without whom He never shall act; but it is moreover necessary for the exposition of that beautiful passage, Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12, when, after quoting from the 68th Psalm the prophecy of Christ's receiving gifts when He ascended up on high, Paul declares that these gifts which He received for men He gave to men, in the form of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And accordingly, having received from God the gift of the knowledge of His own apocalypse or manifestation, He endows an apostle with it, and gives him to the churches for their edification, being, indeed, rich only for us, wise only for us, honoured only for us. Marvellous love, grace, and condescension!

Observe now what a new dignity is given to this book, what a new importance and value are conferred upon it from these considerations. It is a thing which Christ received from God after His ascension; and which God gave unto Him on express purpose to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. God enable us, His servants, to estimate the gift aright! Oh may the Lord turn the heart of His Church to this book, and make me instrumental to remove some prejudices and false impressions from the minds of His own dear people, and to draw many with energy to the perusal, and study, and meditation of this heavenly gift, which we may well believe hath a superiority over the other books of Scripture, commensurate with the dignity and power of Christ risen, over and above Christ in flesh. If the flesh veiled His knowledge, acting like the microscope, which, while it giveth minuteness of observation, hindereth enlargement of view and distance of perception; then that which He came to know, and was capable of knowing after His resurrection, must have a compass, and range, and glory about it surpassing the other Scriptures. And this I do firmly believe concerning the Apocalypse, that it is especially the food of the resurrection life which the regenerate have in Christ Jesus; that as it most fully declareth the honour and glory in which God hath set His Son, our Saviour, so doth it, more than any other book of Scripture, lift the soul into the fellowship of that Divine place and dignity whereof we are promised the co-heirship at the coming of the Lord with all His saints.

2. And now for what end does He give this revelation of His own

advent unto Christ? For *to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.* Observe here, brethren, that the object of the living God is to make known to His servants future things; according to that office of the Spirit, "He will show you things to come." And yet this is our high offence, to endeavour to understand the future. It has been rung from the one end of the island to the other, and in the schismatical, heretical, and sectarian magazines the charge is brought and published against us, that we are a set of blasphemous persons, fools, and madmen, because we study what is about to be, and endeavour to know the things that must shortly come to pass; and yet no other reason or object is given by the living God for communicating this book to His Church, but that for which we are so slandered. For this very thing, so shocking in the sight of these blind guides of the blind, God gave it unto Christ, that He might show unto His servants things which are not yet come to pass. Will any man tell me, then, that we ought not to search into that which is future, till after it come to pass; that it is a dangerous thing for me to lead the way, for you to follow after it? Go tell these self-sufficient babblers, that they speak against the express declaration of God's word, against the solemnity and dignity of that single end for which this book came to be made known to Christ, and by Christ to us. And they will endeavour to frighten us with the breath of their nostrils! Out upon such ignorance. How then, say ye, O sons of the wise! that we are not to look out for the things that are coming to pass, till after they come to pass? A prophecy, say they, must remain unknown to us; and was not given to be known until the event, that we might see that God knows the end from the beginning, and that nothing comes to pass without His having foreseen it. I do not think it unworthy of God to condescend to teach us the lesson of His foreknowledge, and this lesson prophecy doth clearly teach. But doth it teach that only? or is it given to teach that primarily? I deny that it is. In one passage, indeed, (Isa. xliii. 9,) I do find God challenging the idolaters to prove their gods by this, that they can foretell future things; and I do likewise find our Lord saying, (John xvi. 4,) "But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them." No doubt this is one object of prophecy, to prove that God hath in Him the power to foresee and foretell; but are there no consolations of the Church, no judgments of the world, no justifications of His providence, no ends of His holiness to be attained at the same time? Is it mere *power* He wanteth to convince us of? Is it not rather His power to do thus and thus, to support and deliver His faithful ones, to destroy all who rise up against Him? A part

of the truth is not the whole of it. Neither is he wise who calleth a part the whole, but he is schismatical and erroneous. Now, that prophecy is for the knowledge of things before they happen, let all the prophets testify, who as distinctly as words could utter it, did tell and describe every judgment, time, place, and person, and effect, before it happened. Did not Isaiah tell king Ahaz, and Jeremiah king Zedekiah, and Ezekiel and Daniel the captives, what things were to happen in their days? Did not our Lord tell Jerusalem what was to happen? Did not Paul and Peter and John tell the Church what was to happen? And here is not the Apocalypse written on very purpose to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass? What do these boasters of themselves mean? What meaneth this confederacy of all orthodox and heterodox, churchman and schismatic, believers and unbelievers, gathered together to put down inquiry into unfulfilled prophecy, as the attempt of heated brains, of insurrectionary and state-troubling men. Was Lord Napier, the inventor of logarithms, such a one? Was Sir Isaac Newton, the demonstrator of the system of the universe, such a one? Were Mede and Bishops Newton and Horsley such ones? Were Durham, and Fleming, and Johnstone such crazy and despicable fools? Ye misguided people, destroyed for lack of knowledge, it is not a confederacy of what ye call enlightened and intellectual men against us, but against the prophetic word of God, which you would in your grossest ignorance of what it contains, represent as a sealed book, as a dark riddle, as an unintelligible hieroglyphic, till after it has been accomplished and is become of little further use to the Church; for certes he is but a poor churchman, ay, and a poor deist, who needs to have it continually proved to him that God doth know the end from the beginning. Nevertheless, as hath been said, we allow this to be an end, though a very remote one, of prophecy; but the chief end we assert in the words before us, is "to teach unto God's servants things which shall shortly come to pass." It is an end of prophecy to teach us that He who spake it was inspired of God, according as Christ declareth, (John xvi. 4,) "These things I have told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I have told you of them;" but it is likewise an end of prophecy to give to the Holy Spirit His office of teaching through the Word the things which are to come, according as it is written in the same discourse, verse 13, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Now what are these men who will combine against the work and office of the Holy Spirit here declared by

Christ, and the end of the Father declared in the first verse of the Revelation? They are scoffers, be they called liberal or evangelical, churchman or sectarian, catholic or schismatic; they are "the scoffers" prophesied as being about to arise in the last times: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," (2 Pet. iii. 1–4.) But to put this matter still farther beyond all doubt, is it not written in the second Epistle of Peter, chap. i. 19? "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Turn with me also to the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chap. ii. 9, "But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Nothing can be more mysterious than such things; yet hear what follows: "God *hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit;* for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And if you would find the root of this matter—the secret cause of this objection to receive the Spirit as the interpreter of things to come—you have it from the mouth of God in the 14th verse: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The expressions, "things which must shortly come to pass," and "the time is at hand," especially when connected with the frequent mention of Christ's coming quickly, (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20,) and the solemn command in the same chapter, (ver. 10,) "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand,"—these, and such like expressions, puzzle those who will not study Scripture, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, but must have everything to be conformed to common language, otherwise they call it either mystery or dishonesty in the interpreter. And I have even heard masters in Israel gravely argue, that something more must certainly be intended by the expression "Christ's coming," than His personal coming at the end of this age; otherwise the Holy Spirit of truth would never have spoken of it as near at hand. And they find a very convenient event in the destruction of Jerusalem, which they call a

coming of Christ, and to which they find little difficulty (in their loose way) in referring the various predictions contained in the Gospels concerning the coming of the Lord. But this subterfuge being cut off in the Apocalypse, which, by common belief, was written posterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, I know not how they explain this matter, but do suppose they leave it with incurious ignorance and sapient indifference, to be explained by the event; as being of that numerous class of things to which none but fools would think of applying themselves. Incurious and self-sufficient ignorance! The true resolution of this difficulty is to refer to other parts of Scripture, where the Holy Ghost speaks of the time of Christ's absence, and see whether it be spoken of as a little while or not: if we find that this is God's method of estimating it, what are we that we should call it long, because it includes many generations of the sons of men? He who constituted the ages is alone able to give their comparative dimensions; and if He calls the season of my Lord's absence a short season, I must believe that it is short, compared with the period of His abode when He comes again; that it is a brief season in the reckoning of Him with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Now, except in one place, (Luke xix. 11,) where by a parable He endeavoured to counteract the erroneous opinion which then prevailed that the kingdom of heaven was then to appear, and therefore, as well as for the propriety of the parable, speaks of His absence as a season sufficient for a long journey, to permit His servants to trade and make gain of their several charges, except in this instance; and here also He is guarded against speaking of the time as long, though the distance be called great,—we always find the season of His absence spoken of as a short season. I shall quote three instances of this. The first is Luke xviii. 8, where by a parable having set forth His Church by the similitude of a widow, and her Antichristian oppressor by that of an unjust judge, with whom the widow by urgency at length prevails, He then applies the parable, (ver. 7, which should be joined to the preceding chapter; the parable of the widow being only as it were a way of half hiding, half revealing the endurance of His Church, which needed to be spoken by proverbs, and not plainly,) "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" That the day of vengeance and the time of His coming are one and the same event, is sufficiently declared in the discourse, of which the parable is, as it were, but an episode, (Luke xvii. 24, 26, 30.) And He expressly declareth that the time from which He

spake, until that avenging of the elect, and coming of the Son of man to the earth, was a short time, (ἐν τάχει,) in brief, the very same form of expression as is used in Rev. i. 1, the passage now under consideration. At the same time He calls it long, in respect to the sufferings of the elect, but short when compared with the other season of their reward. Parallel with this also is 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, to which we refer without citing it. The second passage to which we appeal, in order to prove that it is the common form to speak of Christ's absence as a short period, is in Heb. x. 37, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry:" although in the verse immediately preceding, looked upon in respect of the trials of God's people, they are said to have need of patience. So also in the passage quoted (Heb. xii. 26, 27) from Haggai, ii. 6, it is there written of the time when both heavens and earth shall be shaken, that it is a little while: "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land." Now the apostle expressly referreth this to the removal of these things, and the introduction of the kingdom and glory of Christ, which cannot be shaken. The third passage, and perhaps the strongest of all, is taken from our Lord's discourse concerning the duration of His absence, John xvi. 16, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father." The little while here spoken of extends over all the season of His absence from the Church at the right hand of His Father, and not to the little period of absence that was to occur before His resurrection while He lay in the tomb. For, during these days, He was not taken out of their sight; He was with them on the cross; and He was with them in the tomb; and during the forty days He was with them, eating and drinking with them; and therefore to none of these can "the little while" during which they should not see Him be applied. This will more clearly appear by observing the reason which He assigneth: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me;" and why? *because I go to my Father.* Now, I say, that Christ did not ascend to His Father during the time that His body was lying in the grave, for when He was risen from the grave, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father." The ascension to His Father was when He ascended on the Mount of Olives; and here, therefore, we have a manifest proof that the expression "little time" refers to the time of His absence during which His Church hath not seen Him,—the interval of time that He is with His Father. To confirm this, let us go on with the context. 'Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto

them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." This duration of the world's joy is until His coming to judge it;—the little while of His absence, which is also the season of the Church's sorrow, according to His answer to the question, Why do thy disciples not fast? Those of the bride chamber do not fast when the bridegroom is with them; but when the bridegroom is taken from them, then they will fast. Then He likeneth the anguish of His Church for His reappearance, to the agony of a travailing woman, because like this, though it hath an appointed time, it is ever uncertain. "Of that hour knoweth no man." And so in all the prophets, the resurrection of the saints is compared to travail, (Psalm cx., Isaiah xxvi., Hosea xiii.,) and likewise in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. viii. And the appearing again of Christ with His risen saints unto creation is this birth of her joyful burden with which she has been so long distressed. And so the Lord himself interprets His own parable: "A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." And so it is not so absurd or uncommon as you think to speak of Christ's coming as in a short time, and after a little while; nor do we make God a liar when we so interpret it, but follow the manifest sense of His word. And surely it is a very little time when compared with the eternal age of Messiah's kingdom which is to follow.

Further, with respect to the word *shortly—shortly come to pass,*— it is a remarkable thing, that in the third verse the nearness of the time should be given as a principal reason for reading the book: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; *for the time is at hand.*" Seeing then, the blessing is to come on account of this very thing, "that the time is at hand," we conclude, that if God had not known that this book was to be instantly useful, and immediately profitable to the Church, he would not have urged the reading of it by the instancy of the time, and the urgency of the events. It is as much as to say, You cannot delay it; you must not delay it, because the time it is needed for is close at hand. And there can be no doubt, that it was this book which supported the martyrs of the primitive Church. And it is observable, that no

book of Scripture is more quoted in the writings of the fathers of the second and third centuries than this book; and I believe that it was the epistles to the seven churches which supported the hearts of the martyrs. Of the great attention given to this book in the first centuries of the Church, nothing is so clear a proof as that a great part of the heresies of those times arose out of the things contained in it. The heresy, "that there is no resurrection of the dead," (1 Cor. xv. 12,) "that the resurrection is past already," arose out of the leaven even now working in the Church, which explaineth away "the first resurrection," into the regeneration of the soul, set forth and sealed to the believer in baptism; and at this door rushed in the heresy of Cerinthus, "that the believers should enjoy the earth, and make themselves merry with the abundance of its delicacies." The millennium, we know, was so much thought of and acted on in the first centuries, that millenarian became a name for a body in the Church, amongst whom, even in the fifth century, Jerome says, there were a very great number of the orthodox. And an earlier father, I think Justin Martyr, says, that those in his time who were altogether orthodox believed in the millennium, during which Christ's kingdom was to be set up, and Christ personally to reign on earth. Papias also, to whom the opposers of the orthodox doctrine of Christ's personal reign are pleased to trace what they call the absurdity of millenarianism, lived in the second century, and was instructed by Polycarp, one of the disciples of John. All which goes to prove, beyond a doubt, what indeed has never been denied, that this book came into immediate use in the churches; as might well be believed, both from the constancy of the blessing before us, and from the peremptory mandates given to John to send it to the churches. These things are certain. I will now advance a conviction of my own: That the readiness, the promptness, to a fault, for meeting martyrdom, was due first of all to the glorious promises of the seven epistles, being addressed only to those who should overcome and be faithful to the death; and, next, to the most wonderful honour put upon the martyrs' blood in the twelfth chapter, where no less a consequence is ascribed to their not loving their lives unto the death, than this, "that thereby Michael and his angels were able to prevail in battle against the devil and his angels, and cast them headlong out of heaven." Add to this the assurance given in the sixth chapter, that ever as the martyr's blood was poured out before the altar, his soul clothed in white went in before the Lord, and was partaker of His joy. I have no doubt, therefore, that the repeated mention of "the time being near at hand," had the effect of bringing forth that "noble army of martyrs," who won for Christianity its

seat and dignity upon the earth. True it is that when the Church began to be leavened with the mystery of iniquity, and to work into the hands of the Roman emperors, and the Papal adultery was consummating, it came to pass that this book, which presenteth the Church as ever suffering from and ever contrary to Rome, began to fall out of the hands of the preachers, and ministers, and flock of Christ, into the hands of the scribes and the doctors, out of whose hands it hath hardly yet been delivered. And now they went so far as to cast doubts upon its genuineness and authenticity; and to beat down those glorious hopes of Christ's advent and kingdom on the earth, in the faith of which the first Christians had won the crown of martyrdom. And as the light, and life, and liberty of these glorious hopes waned out with the hiding and sealing of that book from which they flow, there came in the bondage, and oppression, and worldliness of the Papacy; until at length in the Reformation, this book was again unclasped by the preachers and opened to the people. You know well, who are children of the Church of Scotland, that there was no book out of which our reformers took the substance of their preaching against the Pope more than out of this book: and you may depend upon it, my brethren, that if we are to be roused to make a stand and a demonstration against liberalism; against blind indifference to Papists and Protestants, who in these times are put upon equal dignity and equal trust; if we are to be delivered from union with the confederacy forming against Christ and His Church; it must be by again opening this most blessed book, of which it may be said now, as heretofore, "Blessed is he that readeth it, for the time is at hand." I have undertaken to speak sincerely, without the fear of man, and with an open breast before God; and I tell you all that one of the principal reasons which determined me to expound this book in this metropolis, where I received my education, and to which my knowledge is in some way due, was the support lately given here by so many distinguished, powerful, and reverend men, to opinions alike subversive of Church and State, and their misguided zeal of liberality towards that false religion which our fathers abhorred. Now, having a love for these men, as well as a high value for the communications of this book, and, from the study of it, having seen the revolution wrought upon the minds of my people: and judging also from my own experience, who was convinced in my understanding, from reading it in faith, long before I was convinced in my heart of the error of liberalism; I resolved to do the same office for this city which I had done for my own flock, and to bring before its thoughtful people the truth of God here declared; to sow the seed of the truth, and endeavour to convince

their hearts of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which this book gives to the Church: being well assured that when I am gone away, God will pass it over unto other and abler hands, through whom this book may become the instrument of preserving us, as a Church, and as a people, from those false principles and dreadful consequences which are involved in the grand rebellion of these times, against the prophetic word of God, in favour of human wisdom, policy, prudence, and expediency.

3. The third particular concerning the transmission of this book is, that He sent His angel to signify unto His servant John, and through Him to the Church on earth. Now, who, or of what kind and order, is this angel?—We have already seen how it doth not blemish or impeach the Divinity of Christ, to say that by becoming man He brought Himself into the condition of needing supplies of knowledge, as well as of consolation and strength, from the Father, which He received in answer to His faith by the continual ministry of the Holy Ghost, and with the Holy Ghost thus communicated from the Father, He, the person of the Son, ever contracting Himself out of His Godhead, ever emptying Himself out of that infinitude of being, wherein He thought it no robbery to be equal with God, did act with the weak implements of fallen manhood, a holy blameless life, a powerful triumphant life, making a show of principalities and powers, and triumphing over them openly in His cross. Of this the Father's gift of the Holy Ghost to the body which He prepared, the Saviour received the fulness when He ascended up on high; including the fulness of knowledge, as well as the fulness of power, and every other kind of fulness which differenceth the condition of a weak, infirm, fallen (but not sinful) humanity from the condition of that glorious and powerful, most dignified and beautiful humanity, in which He now sitteth at the Father's right hand, receiving the homage and confession of every creature of God;—which is all signified in that word, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." Those who ignorantly fear and idly talk, as if this did derogate from Christ's Divinity, must consent to learn the doctrine of the Trinity a little more perfectly; and a little more deeply to study the nature of a self-existent Being; if so be they will set themselves up to be teachers and masters in Israel: but if they will be content with the degree of learners, they may be taught by every opening of the holy Scriptures, that Christ did receive something from God on His ascension, which He had not before. And whether this something be much or little, it is equally contradictory to their notion of His Divinity, that He as Christ cannot be added to in any respect. They dare to assert, that to say Christ received

more knowledge upon His ascension into glory, is to deny His omniscience and His Divinity, [and yet He grew in wisdom:] well, then, I say if He received any additional power, it is to deny His omnipotence [and yet He says after His resurrection, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth;" and the apostle says, "He hath received the promise of the Spirit," or the promised Holy Ghost:] and if He received any more glory, why then He was not the all-sufficient One, [and yet He prays to be glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was.] And, to cut short this reproof of their unscriptural notions, it is written, Eph. i. 19–23, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." But if, not choosing to be taught they will be teachers, then let them consider wherein lies the difference between a self-existent person, and one not self-existent, but created; Where, but in this? that the created and dependent being hath a law according to which he must act out his being; whereas the other is a law unto Himself; is the Parent of law, the Law-giver; who is not bound to any limitation or extent of being, but hath power to contract Himself to what form it pleaseth Him to come into, and to hold Himself there how long He pleaseth, and for what ends His good pleasure moveth Him thereto. Such power the self-existing Son of God putteth forth, when He consenteth to be made man, and by act divine doth empty and exhaust Himself unto the dimension of the embodied soul, which the Father appropriated to Him; and in so emptying Himself and holding Himself in limitation, I see the proof decisive of a Divine person. But being so emptied, is He not emptied? Is it but a show and sham of it? Is His knowledge, His power, His glory, His being, the same as ever! Then, where lieth the humiliation? It is not a reality, but only a fiction. And is He not God still? Yea, He is God still; but God consenting, or having consented, for God's glory, to be ever bounded and limited by man's conditions. And where standeth the Godhead now in its unrestricted freedom and unlimited infinitude? It standeth in the person of the Father, ever blessed, ever worshipped: in whose worship the Son is worshipped, and the Holy Ghost likewise. And for what employeth the Father His infinite

power, wisdom, and glory? To bring all things into subjection to His Son; in this humbled form of manhood, to make Him Head over all unto His Church, to gather all things unto Him, and in Him to constitute them for ever blessed; and conscious that their blessedness standeth only in Him. Such an exaltation the Father gave Him, when He said, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Son having done all to make the Father's name glorious by becoming the Christ, the Father straightway doth all to make the name of the Christ glorious over all creation. This is the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. I touch upon it often because I love it, and would fain teach my adversaries something for the profit of their souls.

And now when Christ had attained to the supremacy of creation, and obtained that treasury of power whereby all creation was to be enriched, with which the Father himself was to go forth, not His own name to glorify, but the name of Christ, to whom do the supplies of the gift proceed forth? in what streams do they flow? Our text declareth in one particular instance, that when He had received of God that insight into His own future power and glory which is contained in this book, He instantly despatched an angel to make it known by means of John unto His members upon the earth. The same delight in His Church, the same headship over all for His Church's sake, is set forth not by a particular instance, but by a general declaration, in that passage from the Ephesians which I have already quoted, but which I think it good to dwell upon a little more in this place, both to edify the believer, and to still the adversary. The apostle exhorting the Church to unity by various considerations doth lead them the way unto it, through the knowledge of all the various gifts and offices in the Church being appointments and furnishings of Christ out of His resurrection, power, and glory; saying, Eph. iv. 7, &c., "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," &c., [for I cannot quote all this glorious passage.]—It appeareth from this passage (1.) That the grace which every one possesseth, he receiveth from Christ out of that fulness which He

received from the Father upon His ascension. It becomes a gift to us, in consequence of its being first a gift from the Father to Him. Doth not this prove that He emptied Himself of His Divinity in order to become man; which having done for the glory of the Father's name, that same Father for whom He had become emptied did fill the emptiness of His manhood, did strengthen its weakness, did glorify its vileness. ("I am a worm, and no man," Ps. xxii. 6.) From the moment of His conception He did so; sanctifying and perfecting that body which He had taken, and at His resurrection did endow Him with the power of endowing others, of quickening them, of enriching them, and finally bringing them to the inheritance of His glory. (2.) That when Christ had received the promised Spirit upon His resurrection from the dead, and would communicate it to as many as the Father should give Him, He doth it not by a promiscuous, even-handed, equal distribution, but by constituting an endowed class, through whom the endowment of the many should proceed. He constituted apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, by gifts of the Holy Ghost, and gave these gifted men to the Church, that, through their labours in the work of the ministry, His whole body might be edified and reared up to perfection. To this same effect it is written in the last words of the Gospel by Matthew, that He came and spake unto His eleven disciples, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye *therefore*, and teach all nations. . . . And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This was spoken in the understanding that they were to wait in Jerusalem till they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 4, 5, "Commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." And again, ver. 8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The power which Christ received, "all power in heaven and in earth," He doth at present put forth in the Holy Spirit, and the residue He retaineth in His hand until He shall come in the glory of His power. And the power of the Holy Spirit,—be it knowledge, be it holiness, be it healing, be it love, be it any gift whatever,—He communicates to the Church through the means of the pastors and ministers of the Church, (if so be that the offices of evangelist and apostle have ceased;) He doth not scatter it promiscuously, but He gathereth it into the spring-heads of living men, and the cisterns of visible ordinances, that He may keep up

the form and body of government and obedience in the Church till He come again.

Seeing, then, that this truth is both evidenced in the instance of the Apocalypse, and broadly stated as the universal rule, both in the Epistle to the Ephesians and other parts of Scripture, we are naturally led to expect that the angel to whom Christ committed the ministry of this gift, and who brought it to the vision and apprehension of the Apostle John, should stand closely related, in some way or other, to that Church which is His fulness, to those men for whom He hath received gifts; and, as he is manifestly a celestial and not a terrestrial person, that he is one of the Church in heaven, whom Christ sent on this high and holy legation. I say this is the natural inference from the general doctrine stated in Scripture, concerning the end for which He hath received the resurrection-glory, and the persons by whom He dispenseth it. It is further evident, in a negative way, from certain things, which are testified in various parts of Scripture, concerning the invisible beings commonly designated angels, of whom it is not anywhere said that they teach anything to the Church; but in one place it is revealed that they learn from the Church, (Eph. iii. 10,) where the apostle declares, that he received his commission and his instructions as an apostle, not only for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, who learn from the Church the manifold wisdom of God. The order of revelation is not from the angels to the apostles, and thence to the Church; but from the apostles to the Church, and thence to the angels. And agreeably hereto it is written, (1 Pet. i. 12,) that the angels desire to look into those things which had been openly preached by the apostles unto the Church; and such would not be their desire if they knew them already most perfectly, and had received them at first hand from Christ to bring them unto the apostles. But that which sets my mind at rest, both with respect to the inferiority and posteriority of the angels to the Church in this particular, is the continual declaration of Scripture, that while the angels and principalities are under him, the Church is His body and His fulness, (Eph. i. 22.) Now, what is meant by the body, if it be not that to which the head directly communicates its purpose, and through the organs of which it makes it known? And how would the Church be His fulness, if others knew more than she doth of His mind, from whence she receiveth it by distribution? And how should knowledge pass from the head to the outward object, without passing through the body; and how return to the body again, without the consciousness of the head? It is absolutely

necessary for the substantiating of that relation of unity which the Church standeth in to Christ, to believe that there is the most entire consciousness between the one and the other, without the intervention of a third party. Be it now observed, for the completeness of this idea, that the Church is not two: one in heaven, and another on earth; one indolent and inactive in heaven, the other active and militant on the earth: neither is the Church cut asunder into two parts, because the one is within the veil and the other without it; but the Church is essentially one and indivisible, whether on earth or in heaven; and it is this one body of the elect and saved which constitutes Christ's fulness. So far, therefore, from expecting that Christ should fulfil His function of High Priest and mediatorial King without the disembodied part of the Church, by the embodied part of the Church alone, I believe that such an idea is utterly subversive of the glory of the Church, and contradictory to the tenor of Scripture, and especially of this revelation of Jesus Christ, as we shall have ample opportunities of showing at large. At present, it belongs to our subject to show that the angel through whom Christ showed these things to John, is one of the disembodied Church. When this celestial messenger, this legate *a latere* of our great Priest and King, had executed His commission, He doth thus describe Himself, (Rev. xxii. 9,) "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." A question might be made with respect to the grammatical construction both of the English version, and of the original, whether the thing here declared be that he was one of the brotherhood of the prophets, or that he was a fellow-servant with John and with them. I incline to receive the former interpretation as the just one, and to believe the sense of the passage to be, that he was John's fellow-servant, of John's brethren the prophets, and of the company of the Church who observed or kept the words of this book; expressing three things thereby: the first, That he might not be worshipped, being himself a servant such as John; the second, That his office while on earth had been to prophesy; and the third, That in the state where now he was, he was an observer of the words of this book, which, all neglected as it is on earth, hath the special observation of the Church in heaven. If any one should prefer the other interpretation; though it will not bear all this information, it will bear thus much, that he was a fellow-servant with the beloved disciple, and with his brethren the prophets, and with those who kept the words of this book. And even this, as it appears to me, is conclusive as to his being one of the Church; for though angels be called minis-

tering spirits (Heb. i. 14,) they are not called God's servants, (δουλοι του Θεου)—which expression is given to the Church (ver. 1) to whom the prophecy was consigned by God,—but ministering spirits, (λειτουργικα πνευματα, spirits of the liturgy, *i.e.* whose office is connected with the service of God, and how connected is straightway told us,) sent forth unto deaconship, for the sake of those that are about to inherit salvation. The meaning of which I take to be this, that angels have not co-equal rank with the Son, or with those who are heirs with him of glory, but do stand unto them in the relation of deacons to the Church, for external ministry and outward accommodation: having, as I shall show hereafter, certain provinces of nature and providence to watch over, which they govern for the glory of Christ and His Church, but not intermeddling in the spiritual dignity of the kingdom of grace. As providence is to grace, so I believe angels are to the Church; as the dispensation of Moses was to the gospel, so I believe angels are to the Church: therefore the law is said to be given by the ministry of angels, but the gospel by the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers: therefore also the law is called the elements of this world, and the rudiments of the world, being, as it were, an image made by means of angels out of those worldly rudiments over which they have the control, but not the reality of grace, which came by Jesus Christ. And therefore the apostle, admitting that the ages past have been under angels, declares thus concerning the age to come, which it is the object of the Apocalypse to reveal: "Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak," (Heb. ii. 5.) While, therefore, I firmly believe that, under the former dispensation, God did make use of angels to convey His mind to the prophets, because that Christ was not yet glorified, I believe that from this great epoch they have not been made use of for the administration of the kingdom of grace, but glorified saints only, such as can be called with respect to the apostles, σύνδουλοι, fellow-servants; charged with the same apostolic ministry within the veil with which they were charged without. And, accordingly, we have those who ministered in word and doctrine to the churches called angels of the churches, Rev. i. 20.

But still further to show that the angel's description of himself will bear no other interpretation than that which we have given above, let me refer to another passage, (xix. 10,) where an angel, (one of those who pour out the vials, xvii. 1,) being in like manner solicited to accept worship, doth in the same terms refuse it: "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus."

The construction of the original is exactly the same here as in the other place. Now, of the angels who poured out the vials, whereof this angel was one, we have a very particular description in the fifteenth chapter, where, in the sixth verse, they are represented as coming out of the holy place of the temple in heaven, in the raiment of priests, with the girdle, as it would seem, of high priests, to signify that they are of the Church of the first-born ones, or, perhaps, that they are both kings and priests, being of the order of Melchizedec. But be this as it may, both their dress and the place from which they issue forth declare them to be priests; and if so, then belong they to the Church of redeemed men, to whom this dignity appertaineth, (Rev. i. 6,) and to whom alone it doth appertain of all the creatures of God, as we shall show when we come to treat of the several ascriptions of praise and loyal attestations of fealty presented to the Lamb in the fifth chapter of this book. For there it belongeth only to the four beasts and twenty-four elders to take to themselves the honour of royal priesthood, as to them only to speak concerning the book, in respect to which the angels and other creatures are entirely dumb. Now it can be shown, I think, beyond a question, that these four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders are the Church in heaven. So much have I to say in this Introductory Lecture concerning the angel who intervenes between Christ and the Apostle John. The subject will often come before us in this exposition; and we may, in one word, anticipate the conclusion, which is, that every act of Christ towards His Church on earth, every movement of our King in His mediatorial kingdom, is brought to us through means of the Church now in glory, who have thus the ministry of the most holy place, into which the High Priest is entered, and are the cherubim there, as we have the ministry of the holy place without the veil; and between these two is constituted the completeness of the temple of His body. This is the idea out of which the Papists fabricated, upon the anvil and with the tools of hell, their abomination of saints' mediation, intercession, and worship, and with which we Protestants are too little familiar, in our abhorrence of that abuse, as, indeed, we are too little familiar with everything which concerneth the Church.

4. The fourth and last thing which comes to be considered under this head of authority, or authorship, is the person to whom the angel made it known. This is the last link in the chain of communication: first, God; second, Christ; third, His angel; fourth, John. And the question is, who is this John? He thus describeth himself: "His servant John, who bare record of the Word of God, (he witnessed the Logos of God,) and the testimony (witness) of Jesus Christ, and all things that (whatever things) he saw." If there be a

John who witnessed the Logos of God, and the witness of Jesus Christ, and things which he himself saw, that is the man. And who is this but John the apostle, the beloved disciple, whose Gospel is wholly taken up with the witness of the Logos, or Word of God, and with the witness which Jesus Christ gave concerning God, and with the things of which he was an eye-witness? If, in a few words, the character of John's Gospel and of his Epistles were given fully and truly, these were the words by which the Spirit here identifies him. The introduction to his Gospel, contained in the first fourteen verses of it, is to declare that THE WORD concerning whom the Jews and Gentiles both believed, or at least speculated, that He was a subsistence in the Godhead, was the person who was generated flesh, and tabernacled amongst men; and was named Jesus of Nazareth, and anointed the Christ of God. And the Gospel thus introduced with the testimony of THE WORD, he thus concludeth with the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, (xx. 31:) "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." The same character have his first and second Epistles, of which it may be further said, that they do maintain against various evil spirits which were gone abroad, that Jesus is the Word of God, the only Christ, the Son of God, condemning all who refused the same as Antichrist. Take all these peculiarities of his writings together, and it will, I think, appear that John's distinction among the apostles was to bear record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. I incline to believe, therefore, that the second verse of the Revelation is introduced on express purpose to give us the personal identity of the writer, and to cut off all disputes which might arise on such a head. And it is a most important object which it serveth, because there grew up in the Church, towards the fifth and sixth centuries, a doubt whether this book was written by the Apostle John or by another; and that doubt has been clothed with much show and subtlety of learning, and exhibited to the Christian Church in those times in one of those abominable magazines, miscalled religious, which do more harm to the Church than anything else; and, if not promptly resisted, will, I think, subvert the Church altogether. There is not the shadow of evidence for such a doubt. The universal testimony of the first three centuries gives the book to John the apostle. Nevertheless, the pure love of doubting, combined with the desire of casting discredit upon the interpreters of prophecy, has stirred some of those who affect great orthodoxy, and still more good sense and dictatorial wisdom, to rake up the ashes of the question long forgotten and laid at rest, driven on by Satan, in order to discredit

this holy book, and us the interpreters, and to lull the people into such a sleep of indifference as they have fallen into themselves, and so make them a more easy prey to the evil spirits of the times. To confound, as I conceive, all such insidious attempts of the wicked, this second verse gives the identity of John, proving him to be the same who bare record of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ in the Gospel and the Epistles. And while we thus assert for John this prerogative among all the apostles, we do not derogate from the unity of the doctrine which they taught, but only vindicate for him that special honour to which this beloved disciple was advanced of Christ. He leaned on His bosom, and he was honoured above all the rest to record the most precious things which fell from His lips; and, being thus faithful unto his Lord, he was preferred from all the Church to receive this new communication, and to convey it unto the churches.

I know not well how it hath happened that the above simple interpretation and most important application of this second verse hath escaped the notice of commentators: but to me it is not only manifest that the true intention of it is to identify the apocalyptic seer with the evangelical witness, but likewise that the common interpretation, which makes it a simple assertion of His faithfulness, cannot stand. It may satisfy the last of the three clauses, "whatever things He saw," and I have no objection that this clause be referred to the things in this Apocalypse, but the two former clauses cannot thus be satisfied. For though it be true that the witness of Jesus is the spirit of (the) prophecy, yet is not this the proper title of the book, which is in the preceding verse called "the discovery, or manifestation, of Jesus Christ." And though it be not unusual in rhetorical writings to change the name in successive clauses, for the sake of illustration, it is little so in Scripture; and, therefore, the expression, "witness of Jesus Christ," cannot with any propriety designate the contents of this book, but must signify either what Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, witnessed of God, or what John himself witnessed concerning Jesus Christ. I think that the same remark is applicable with still more force to the expression, "the Word of God," which in this book is applied exclusively to the person of Christ, (Rev. xix. 13,) and never to the subject-matter or substance of the book, which are often called "the words of this prophecy," but never "the word of God," although in our common way of speech they be thus designated, as also are all the Scriptures. But, lest any one should fail to see the same force as I do in these remarks, I may mention that, for the first two centuries, it was certainly received in the Church that no other was the author of this book

but John the evangelist. In the third century, it was by some, rashly, and without the slightest ground, ascribed to Cerinthus, an early heretic, who made much abuse of the doctrine of the millennium here inculcated; on which account, some of his ignorant and rash opponents fell upon the pitiful and wicked expedient of ascribing the book to him, thinking thereby the easier to rid themselves of his errors. Of this same rash spirit Luther showed an example, in rejecting the Epistle of James, and not translating the Apocalypse in the first edition of his German Bible; of both of which acts, however, he came to repent. But if the common consent of all antiqnity is to overturn the heady rashness of well-meaning but inconsiderate men of evil name, then have we the most satisfactory evidence that this book was written by John the apostle, and believed by the the Church to be most fully inspired. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Jerome, St Augustine, and a continued stream of orthodox authority to our day, from the age next to that in which it was written, concur in the reception, the admiration, and the observance of this book. These things I would not have mentioned, but for the base attempt of a critic, in these our days, to bring it into discredit under the guise of upholding its credibility by a vain parade of learning, calculated to mislead the multitude into a greater indifference to that book, which God hath by so many weighty promises and solemn adjurations pressed upon the attention of all His servants. Methinks these are not times, when the Church is gasping in the last stage of the consumption of her faith, to attempt to take away from her that little portion of the necessaries of life which is still left. This insidious attack, not upon the interpreters, but upon the book, not upon the credibility of the interpretations, but upon the credibility of the book, hath met a prompt and sufficient reply in "Vaughan's Expectations of the Church," to which it is not necessary that I should add anything.

But to me the book doth contain, in that second verse, a sufficient testimony to the author, declaring him to be the same who witnessed the Word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to the completeness of this evidence, that the question, whether the Gospel or the Apocalypse was written first, should receive a solution in favour of the Gospel, or, indeed, should receive any solution at all. For it is to be believed, that the substance of the Gospel was the subject-matter of the apostle's preaching and teaching amongst the churches of Asia, where he is believed to have had his residence before his banishment to Patmos. So, when inditing this book, he referreth to himself as the same who had borne,

amongst the Christians, witness to the WORD of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. And, moreover, it seems to me to agree with the custom of the apostolic writings, when they make mention of themselves, as in Paul's Epistles, Peter's, Jude's, and James's; in all which they give a designation of their identity, according to some distinction and well-known characteristic; and altogether it gives the best sense of verse 2, to understand it as fixing the identity of John to whom the book was given, with that John who delivered and defended the doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth was the WORD of God, and the Lord Christ.

And with this I conclude the second head of discourse, in which I have shown some very important things concerning the authorship of this book, and various weighty grounds on account of which it ought to have authority over us. It hath its origin from God, and may be expected to contain the fulness of His mind, the completeness of His purpose, the consummation of His end, the establishment of His long-delayed and long-marred glory. From God it cometh as a gift unto Christ, after He hath raised Him from the dead, and signified His pleasure that in Him all fulness should dwell: of high price, therefore, we may well believe it; a gift of no ungenerous or poor personage, but of the inexhaustible and bountiful God; a gift to no secondary or inferior personage, but to Him whom He hath delighted to honour and exalt to the right hand of His throne in the heavens. It concerneth the exaltation of His Son, and is conferred with the single object of discovering that excellent glory in which He shall yet come arrayed, those surpassing wonders beyond creation and beyond incarnation, by which He is to gather all things up unto Him as the Head, and there to uphold them for ever in infallible blessedness. Oh! what composition may we expect to be in it, when God is the author and Christ the subject. It is brought to us by the intervention of the Church in glory, who receive it from Christ, to communicate and convey unto the Church on earth; and, being from our Head, and through our brethren now in bliss, what affection it cometh redolent withal, and what love, what reverence, what delight, should it bring to us, who are thus honoured with that with which God honoured His Christ. How welcome, oh, how welcome, should we make this book of highest original, far borne from the secret of the abysmal will of God, presented to our Lord as worthy of His resurrection-honour, and instantly by Him shared with His body, both that which is within and that which is without the veil! And methinks it should add to these glorious qualities one of a very tender and endearing kind, that it comes through that disciple whom most our Jesus loved, was given

to him in his comfortless exile, visited his eyes in his lonely prison, and made it the most gladsome and most honourable spot in the wide world. Wherein perhaps is contained an emblem of that consolation in distress with which this book has ever irradiated the dark and gloomy days of the Church, and with which, if I err not, it shall ere long irradiate our night; proving to us "as a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise on our hearts." These high and holy considerations, by which this book hath a claim upon our reverence and veneration, will be multiplied manifold, when we shall have considered, in the third place,

III. The substance, or subject-matter, and method of the book. Under the first head of discourse, when treating of the name of this book, we discovered that the words by which its name or title is expressed, are in other parts of Scripture translated "the coming, or the appearing, or the manifestation, or the revelation of Jesus Christ;" an event which no one can mistake, or by any ingenuity turn aside from that appearing again of Christ, which all believe in, but so few are waiting for. Adhering to the use and word of Scripture, we have no doubt in laying it down as certain, that the substance of this book is the second coming of Christ, an event in which the primitive Church took the deepest interest; whose very intensity was apt to pass over into painfulness and astonishment and consternation. Most wise, therefore, was it, and most considerate, and most worthy of God's goodness and grace, to take measures to inform His Church more particularly concerning that blessed event on which they hung expectant with a breathless desire. And because the Father doeth nothing but by the Son, He first gives it to the Son, and leaves Him how He may to communicate it to His Church in heaven and on earth. Being communicated to the Church in heaven, He useth their instrumentality to communicate it to the Church on earth, through the medium of John, whom however, he urgeth and requireth to write it in a book, and send it forth to all the Christian churches. To us, indeed, who make as little account of Christ's coming again as if it were not to be, and better that it should not be, it must appear a very strange thing, indeed, that a book should be written to advertise the Church concerning the succession and progress of events leading on thereto, and terminating therein; but to the primitive Church, who were of another mood, it was all in all to be informed and enlightened in this matter. But, because the enemies and opposers of his second coming will be ever alleging that there is little mention thereof in the New Testament Scriptures, I count it good, for their confusion,

and for the justification of the truth, and for the demonstration of this book's importance, to take up some apostolic writing, as it were at random, and to show how constantly this theme is introduced, and with what circumstances of dignity and importance entreated. Let it be the Epistles to the Thessalonians, where I find it (1 Thess. i. 9) put forth upon the same level with the worshipping of God, as if these were the two great divisions of a Christian's duty: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (i. 9, 10.) Next I find it looked forward to by the apostle himself as the time at which he with his converts were to receive their crown: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy," (ii. 19, 20.) Next I do find it looked unto and desired as the time at which all fallibility shall be abolished, and all spot and wrinkle done away with from the members of Christ; when all anxiety shall cease, and all stability and blessedness be perfected: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," (iii. 12, 13.) Next I find the hope of it used as the means of comforting the Church under the loss of her members removed by death: "But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," (iv. 13-18.) And again, v. 23, I find it preached as the great consummation of holiness, and the perfection of devotedness unto God. On all which accounts, methinks, it ought still to be as desirable now as it was then. But, lest the gainsayer, whose ears are as cold as death to any word or argument about the second coming of the Lord, and whose tongue

is bold enough to assert anything, should assert that this Epistle is peculiar in that respect, I go on to weed out from the next Epistle also those weeds which are so obnoxious in their sight,—in mine, blessed as the tree of life. Lo! the whole of the first chapter is taken up with it, presenting us with Christ's coming to the death and destruction, the overthrow and overwhelming, of all antichristian and ungodly men; and their separation from His presence by swift and fiery judgment, at the time that He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when he shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (because our testimony among you was believed,) in that day," (i. 6–10.) And again, lo, the whole of the second chapter is taken up with the same obnoxious subject, being a regular didactic discourse concerning the progress and success of Antichrist until the day of Christ's appearing to consume him with the breath of His mouth, and to destroy him with the brightness of His coming: "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. . . . And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," (ii. 2, 3, 8.) After this, I think, our loud railers against, and most taciturn expounders of, the doctrine of Christ's second coming, should no longer pervert the Church with the falsehood that this is only a secondary and not a primary doctrine of the Christian faith. These passages may also show us how strong a hold the hope had of the minds of the first Christians, and how safe and kind and profitable it was that they should be more largely informed upon the point, and have a scheme of those signs which shall usher it in. To give them this information I believe to be the main object of this book, and not to them only, but to all of us who love and desire his appearing.

While I regard this as the main object of the book, a little reflection will convince us that to attain this object much method is needed.

The coming of Christ was at the distance of many ages, and it is the purpose of God to keep it in the expectation of every Christian of every age. And how is this to be done? how is attention to be kept alive? how is long delayed hope and desire to be kept from fainting? The chief means to this great end, and what God would have all to use, is the uncertainty, the impenetrable cloud of uncertainty, which is expressly hung over this event,—the only event into the time of which we may not curiously pry, nor even presume to say that we have discovered it: for it is written, "Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man." The perfect certainty of the event, the entire uncertainty when, is God's own device for keeping His Church in a continual state of expectation, looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. But besides this, it is accordant with the frailties of man's faith, and with God's kind accommodations thereto, that He should not suspend it upon one promise of the coming event, but add thereto signs of its coming, in a series of revelations, which, as they occur, might fill the Church's heart with more and more assurance, and produce an ever-accumulating mass of evidence even unto the end. It was so with the first promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," which opened more and more into its accomplishment; and why it should not be so with the promise of His coming again, which became a new form of the promise when He had come once, I cannot see any reason to suppose, but all the contrary. That He should come again is as much the palladium of the Church, and her morning-star of hope since His resurrection, as that He should come at all was from the beginning of the world. It is most natural, reasonable, and accordant with God's purpose, that this *our* hope should be opened under the conditions of time, place, and circumstance, as was that of *theirs*. And if so, where should these conditions be found, but in the book which is expressly given for that end? If any wise man will reflect upon it, he will discover that without such a setting and enchasing in the conditions of time, and place, and succession, any object of distant hope will always drop away into an ineffectual and idle saying, like those local prophecies which you find in all parts of the country,—those guesses at prognostication which are handed down by tradition. God, to deliver the great objects of hope, His special truths of prophecy, from such an uncertain faith, doth make all things work together to their accomplishment, and in His inspirations doth set out, with such a distinctness as is proper to hope, the great events which draw on the great conclusion. I say *with such distinctness as is proper to hope*, because we are not to look for that degree of minute information as to a future thing that we have

as to a thing past; otherwise all liberty of action would be taken away. The operation and the advantage of the hope would be lost, if perfect distinctness were given to the object hoped for. An object of my hope acts upon me, and influences me the one way or the other, just because it is not certain, so far as I am concerned, until I take measures to make it so. The liberty of my action is an element in the accomplishment of every object of hope; which liberty would be taken away if the object of hope were fixed, as to its manner of accomplishment, with that iron certainty with which the manner of events past is fixed. In order, therefore, to bring this hope of the Lord's coming again to be operative upon the Church during the ages which were to intervene, a succession of great events, all ending in the consummation, is given. This succession is always sevenfold; seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials; and the consummation always is the coming of Christ, to which the precedent events are but the signs for keeping the faith of the Church. The seventh always brings Christ, the former six prepare the way of His coming. This is true both of the seals and of the trumpets, which are a nearly parallel succession of events. And the seventh of each contains the period of the coming of the Lord. And that this event might be the more distinct, that period is again subdivided into seven parts, which are the seven vials, whereof the last brings the Lord in the destruction of Babylon, and the others lead on to it. But it is not for the purpose of entering into details that we introduce this subject here; and therefore let this suffice.

From this short sketch of the substance and method of the Revelation, it must be manifest, that though the coming of Christ to destroy His enemies, and to give the kingdom to His saints, be the proper object of the book, yet doth it contain, in a way subsidiary and subordinate thereto, all the events whatever which Christ hath been doing upon the earth, or God doing by His means, from the time of His ascension until now, and which He is to do from this time till the time of His coming again. This book, therefore, in respect to its subject-matter or substance, may be said to consist of these two parts; the signs ushering in Christ's second advent, and the advent itself. Of these two portions the latter is by far the more important, and to it the former is subsidiary. But it would be a great mistake to conceive of it as being, therefore, secondary; for those signs do consist of a series of events from the time of Constantine until this day, demonstrative of Christ's Headship of the Church, and supremacy over the state; and setting forth the various attempts of Satan against this Melchizedec-priesthood, and God's successive judgments for the same, within the bounds of the fourth kingdom of

Daniel, which is the Roman empire, where the Church hath had her chief battles to fight unto this day. To Christendom, therefore, doth that historical succession of events, leading on to the judgment of Antichrist, and the coming of Christ, serve the very same ends of consolation and support, which the Jews derive from the historical prophecies of the Old Testament, whereof they are the rightful heirs, as we Christians are the rightful heirs of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. But in like manner, as by reason of the typical and antitypical relation between Jews and Christians, the Old Testament is as profitable to us as to them; to them literally and carnally, to us spiritually and typically; even so hath the Apocalypse an indirect relation to them also, being written in the language of the events described or foretold in the Old Testament. This is a very nice matter, and requires no little elucidation, which I shall endeavour to give it; thereby exhibiting another view of the subject-matter of the Apocalypse, and showing its intimate relation to, and dependence upon, and exposition of, all the prophets whatsoever.

The Jew and the Christian can be as little separated as the body and spirit of a living man; and, like these two constituents of a living man, neither can they be confused or mixed up with one and another, but must be treated of as distinct, though co-essential to life. And as the sense, and the faculty acting by the sense, (which is the understanding as distinguished from the reason,) do give the only language through which spiritual truths or ideas of reason can attempt to express themselves; even so the events of providence and ordinances of religion whereof the Jewish people were the subjects, and which are recorded in their religion, their history, their law, their polity, their psalms, do present us Christians with the only language which is at all adequate for the expression of those spiritual truths which are our peculiar and proper treasure. The language of the New Testament is no more than the appropriation of Jewish words to spiritual ideas; for example, redemption, baptism, sacrifice, atonement, propitiation, eating of flesh and blood, imputation, substitution, prophet, priest, &c., &c. But far beyond the power of particular examples is the fact that the psalmody of every Christian Church chiefly consisteth of the Jewish Psalms, almost all of which have the most intimate reference to the history of that people. It ought not therefore to astonish us to find the sublimest book of the New Testament written entirely, or almost entirely, in the language of the Jewish history, either the past or the prophetical. Such a book is the Apocalypse, as we shall fully justify in the sequel of these lectures. There is not an ordinance of any prominence in the Jewish system which hath not here its exposition in spiritual and invisible

truths. The tabernacle, the altar, the candlestick, the cherubim, the court of the Gentiles, &c.; the high priest, the king, the redeemer, the sacrifice, the redemption of land, the redemption of the wife, are all most prominent objects in the typography of the Apocalypse, being as it were the types with which it is imprinted. Again, the events of their history; their coming out of Egypt, their wilderness-wanderings, their deliverance from Pharaoh the dragon in the waters, their imprisonment in the stronghold of Babylon, and their deliverance thence by the Lord and His sanctified ones, &c., &c.; these events are not only used in the Apocalypse, but the various passages, historical and prophetical, of the Old Testament which have reference to them are, as it were, diligently ransacked for striking and characteristic words and expressions, which are wrought into one beautiful Mosaic, arranged according to the interpretation of the Holy Spirit of truth. And not only so, but the most conspicuous and famous of the prophecies of the Old Testament which point to things future in the history of the Jews;—as, for example, their being sealed against the judgments which fall in consuming destruction upon the Gentiles; their being brought up from the valley of dry bones, and raised, as it were, from the dead; their looking upon Jesus whom they have pierced, and mourning with a godly sorrow and penitence; their being assailed in their own land by Gog and Magog; their becoming the nation of kings and priests upon the earth; their inhabiting their New Jerusalem of holiness, with the waters flowing forth from it to heal the nations;—all these, and a vast deal more of the like glorious prospects of that people, are liberally used in the Apocalypse to express the parallel conditions of the spiritual seed of Israel, the regenerated sons of God, who have their mystical Babylon to be delivered out of, their mystical dragon to escape from, their first resurrection to wait for, their reign with Christ upon the earth, and their city of the New Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven. And what is of higher importance still, the offices of our Lord and Saviour, His present high priesthood within the veil, His present royal dignity at the right hand of His Father's throne, His right as the Redeemer of His bride and of her inheritance, His future action as the man of war, His future enthronisation upon the earth, and all other His functions, during His absence and during His presence, are here set down in the terms of the Jewish polity, which was for this as its chief end constructed of God. So that upon the whole, without going into further particulars, we may say that the Apocalypse is the key of the Old Testament; the revelation of things which, though revealed, were hidden, until this book should be given to open them, and which therefore is com-

manded not to be sealed. And besides this, there are all the predictions of the New Testament concerning Christ's coming and the signs of it, the harvest and the vintage, the mystery of iniquity and Antichrist, the bruising of Satan under our feet, the acts of Michael and his angels, and many more hints of things which receive their full development in this book. Then to all this must be added a regular succession of events within the bounds of Christendom down to the present time, which give veracity to the prophecy, and prevent its being rejected as a visionary set of conjectures, or treated as a grand mystical poem for the embodying of sublime ideas.

When I consider the subject-matter of this book, so various, yet with such unity written; scattered over so wide a field of revelation and of providence, yet condensed within the space of a few pages; I almost start back from the undertaking of expounding it: but when I consider its preciousness, and the blessing pronounced upon those who peruse it, I am encouraged.

Its transcendent value consists in this, that it sets out Christ—that it sets out our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—it takes the veil from off the invisible to man, and draws us up into heaven, and shows us how the Son of man hath been rewarded by the Father, and what work and what offices under the Father, and for the Father, the Lamb slain is able to discharge. And not only doth it show us the history of Christ's amazing person, all-glorious in heaven, but also what offices He is discharging for the Father throughout all creation, especially in the Church, and in the apostasy, and in the world, until His coming again; and not only so but likewise His coming from the presence and in the power of the Father, attended with all His Church and all His saints and all His angels; and finally, when He doth come, what condition He finds the earth in, and how He establishes it for ever. In one word, it is to disclose to us what Christ is, what He is doing, what he hath done, all that he is to do, from the time He ascended up on high, until the time that He comes to plant His glorious throne in visible majesty, and exercise His kingly power over the thrones, not of this world alone, but of all the redeemed universe. And as in a great sphere, which a man cannot glance over at once, this side must be turned to him, and another side and another, before he can take the whole into his limited vision; so the many-sided and most various office of Christ is revealed to us in this book by several successive acts and effects of the manifesting angel. And this is the reason why it is divided into several divisions. Now I must show you what are the sides of Christ's glorious person, so to speak, and what are the offices of His vast function, that are set out to us in

succession. They are chiefly, the seven epistles to the churches: the seven seals; the seven trumpets; the overcoming of the Beast, or Antichrist, in his three several forms; and the establishment of His Church and kingdom on the earth for ever.

1. The first vision or manifestation of Christ, which is contained in the first three chapters, revealeth Him as the Head of all the Churches, and the universal Bishop over the ministers of the Churches [the number seven being, as we shall show more fully hereafter, intended to denote completeness in subdivision, unity in distinctness.] This vision opens to us Christ as the only Bishop, who alone has the seven stars, or all the ministers, in His right hand; all on a level, all equally dear to Him, no one over another, not upheld but by Christ's right hand. The only Bishop over Christ's Church who hath superintendence over the ministry is here shown to us; the only Overseer of the overseers of the Church. And not only has He the seven stars in His hand, but He stands and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; that is, all the churches; seven particular individual churches being chosen in order to give place and circumstance to the prophecy: for all prophecy must rest on a basis of fact; otherwise it is a mystery, and not a reality,—a promise, but not a prediction. It is an invariable principle that every revelation must exhibit itself by means of facts: and there must be both time and events to substantiate every prophecy; without which it may be truth spiritual, but cannot be truth realised; it may be truth universal, but cannot be truth individual and particular. It is not truth fit for man's soul, acting through a body, until it is brought into the condition of space and time. Space, therefore, and time being essential to every prophecy, these seven churches of Asia are taken, in order to show Christ's universal care over the Church in all times. If, for example, you wished to show forth the excellent wisdom and vigilance of some governor or king, you might choose seven cities out of his realm, in very different circumstances and conditions; one commercial, another agricultural, another manufacturing, another a seat of learning, &c., &c., and by showing his wise proclamations unto, and discriminating care over, each one, you would display the manifoldness and completeness of his care much better than could be done by a single instance, or an abstract discourse: so, in order to show out the superintending watchfulness of Christ over His Church, seven are chosen, diversely conditioned, unto whose several cases His ability and His willingness to minister, doth show forth the same more completely to the whole Church and to all the members thereof, and likewise His episcopal charge to all the ministers, and

the Spirit's encouragement to all the people. The end of the vision, therefore, is, to exhibit Christ as the Bishop of your souls; the Pastor of the soul of every believer; Christ as the Head of the Church; Christ the only Bishop over the ministry; Christ the universal Bishop; for the testimony of which this very Church, the Church of Scotland, has suffered more than perhaps all the Churches of Christendom put together. In the various churchyards and solitudes throughout Scotland where the martyrs sleep, there is not one stone upon which it is not engraven, that he who rests beneath died for Christ's headship and royal office in His house. Our Church hath also borne witness against the prelacy of the Church of England, which putteth one minister of Christ over another, and we maintain that the ministers are of equal order and dignity, lying side by side in the right hand of our common Bishop. We have borne testimony likewise against the supremacy of the man of sin, ever standing for the parity of all the ministers of the gospel. In which, her faithful and true testimony, the Church of Scotland is borne out more completely by this vision than by all other books which have been written. For Christ, in addressing the members of the Churches, proceedeth upon the principle that they are equally honoured of Him, and equally dear to Him; and with equal respect doth He give them instruction with regard to their ministerial charges. Such is the substance and intention of the first vision, to claim for Christ the sole dignity of universal Bishop and Head of the Church; and, if possible, to prevent all priests and all kings from usurping that divine name and dignity; which accordingly did acquire such sacredness, that for seven centuries it was never adopted by any creature: and when the patriarch of Constantinople, in the pride and ambition of the devil, did dare to arrogate it to himself, he was held a blasphemer and Antichrist by all the wise and faithful in the Church; and by no one more denounced than by Pope Gregory the Great, who lived himself to assume the divine dignity, and had power to transmit it to his successors in the see of Rome, who now, without a blush, take both the honour and the power of it, and are wondrously indulged in the claim of spiritual supremacy by Protestants even, who deny their claim to temporal supremacy. Therefore I have opened my mouth against that man of sin, and will not shut it till I die. But the men with whom I am surrounded have no such burning hatred and consuming zeal against that pretender, and usurper, and executor of my Lord's high office. They do not hate the beast in these times; because they know him not; or bear with what he has assumed, and upon whom. His hand, like Amalek's, is upon the throne of God, he has assumed the

dignity of universal bishop, and Headship of the Church of Christ, which belongeth only to the Son of man. For which I will call him a usurper, and fight against him while I live, not with carnal but with spiritual weapons. But to return—This first vision, in respect to time, constitutes the time present, the *now* of the Apocalypse: not that it is confined to the events which came to pass during the apostle's life-time, for we shall see in the sequel that it extends over the first three centuries, until the time of Constantine; but that it is confined to the period when the Church was exhibited under trial and tribulation, fighting and overcoming: whereas, from the time of that emperor, it began to be exhibited as in power, and state, and authority;—then, with the powers of the world set in array against it; afterwards, with the powers of the world set in array for it. Not but that the Church is always in subjection and militancy; but that, till the time of Constantine, it did not embrace the kingly and magisterial powers of the earth in that service and warfare against its enemies. There is an essential difference between Christ acting in His Church by the means of His persecuted saints, and Christ acting in the same Church by the means of fostering and nursing princes: in the one, He secretly undermined Paganism,—in the other, He forcibly overthrew it. In the one, He spread the truth as a Prophet and a Priest; in the other, He began to act forcibly as a King; in the one, He presents Himself as gathering souls through great tribulation unto God; in the other, He presents Himself as banishing and expelling from the thrones and dominions of the earth, those idolatrous and apostate kings who filled them, to the dishonour of God, and the service of Satan.

2. Accordingly, when we come to the second vision, which introduceth things that are to be hereafter, and which is contained in the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters, we have a door opened in heaven, and a grand council of the spirits above assembled; the secret, spiritual counsel of the world is revealed: and what does that council consist of? The Father, King of heaven, shown out under flesh of Christ glorified, with a book in His hand, and His throne encircled with a rainbow. And what are His subordinate and viceregal powers? Twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures, whom we discern by their song to be no other than the Church of the redeemed, represented first as kings, and then as priests. I say these elders and living creatures are the Church in glory; for they say, "Thou hast washed us from our sins in thy blood, and hast redeemed us unto God, out of every kingdom, and nation, and people, and tongue." And who can so speak of themselves but redeemed men? who, therefore, we must conclude, are God's dignitaries, the en-

throned ones of heaven, seated round according to the number of the twenty-four chief officers of Israel, who waited upon the kingdom of David and Solomon; and the four holy priestly supporters of the throne, according to the number and figure of the ensigns which the four squadrons of Israel bore around the camp in its marches through the wilderness. There is the Church advanced, in the right of redeemed men, to the height of the highest ascendency of the uppermost seats in heaven. I say that the language of the twenty-four elders and four living creatures in which they speak of themselves, doth bespeak them to be the supporters and the encirclers of the throne of God, dwelling in the throne, and reigning round about the throne, all seated in royal dignity in the heavens, though they be no other than redeemed men. I have much discourse to show forth to you the dignity of the Church in glory, and the part they take in the affairs of the Church on earth: but this is not the place for such details. Then the angels, in undistinguished multitudes, compass the thrones around; but without thrones, or crowns, or any song of redemption, or any assurance of reigning on the earth. Like dutiful subjects, they render unto the Lamb "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," according to those several spheres of creation and providence which they occupy and intend. And finally, every subject creature, every thing which God created and made, whether in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, express their gladness and their mirth on this grand and solemn occasion, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever." Such is the wonderfully sublime scenery with which the second portion of this book, which concerneth the future, is introduced. The vision of the throne and the Lamb, contained in these two chapters, standeth to the latter part of the book in the same relation in which the vision of the Son of man and the candlesticks in the first chapter standeth to the former part of the book; the one being the introduction to the things that are, the other being the introduction to the things that are to be hereafter. They are emblematical features, to which reference is continually made from those two parts of the book, at the head of which they severally stand. And as the one manifestly concerneth the Church only, the seven stars which are the ministers of the churches, and the seven golden candlesticks which are the churches, revealing Christ in His office as Head of all the churches; so doth the other as evidently refer to the whole creation, visible and invisible, rational and irrational, of God; seeing the creatures do all take such a deep interest

in the transaction, and express such lively joy on beholding the Lamb put into possession of that mysterious book, which, somehow or other, reacheth its powerful effect from the centre to the extremest bound of creation. Now as to what the exact significancy of that mysterious transaction may be, this is not the place particularly to inquire; but the simple contemplation of the august assemblage, as it is arranged in its order before the eye of the seer, suggesteth some ideas which every one without inquiry must at once assent to. Suppose there was a grand assemblage, as in the days of old, of the strength and glory of the kingdom, upon some of the ancient moats (as the moat of Ur), artificially cut for the high occasion, and that you, being present, did behold one throne, magnificent above all, in the centre, and a majestic person seated thereon; and encircling it around you saw twenty-four inferior thrones, whereon sat most venerable persons, clothed with robes of office and crowned with crowns of dignity, which ever and anon they acknowledged to be derived from the great majesty of the central throne, and on him dependent. Suppose, moreover, that closer to him still, and in his very bosom and upbearing his person, as Aaron and Hur upbore the hands of Moses, you saw four others of mysterious appearance, through whom the voice of the throne came forth, its thunderings also, and its lightnings, and all its expressions whatsoever; and, finally, that, engirdling the sacred throne around, and as it were guarding them from offence, and waiting to execute their high commands, you beheld an innumerable host of equal and undistinguished people; what would you say concerning such a sight, and how would you interpret it? You would say, this sublime throne in the centre holdeth the King of kings, and these are his inferior kings. With respect, however, to these four living ones in his throne, no similitude on earth could explain it; but we shall find ample explanation of it in holy Scripture, proving that they represent the Church in its priestly character, upbearing the throne of the Eternal, as the four-and-twenty crowned elders represent the same Church fulfilling the kingly office unto the Eternal, who is the Father represented under the symbols of Christ: and the innumerable angels standing around are the subject people, the ministers of the kingdom, as it is said, "the angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation." So much doth the dumb show and inactive scenery of the vision declare unto every contemplative mind—namely, that God in His kingdom over all is served by subordinate thrones, they that sit on which declare themselves to be redeemed men (v. 9), and hath in the bosom, and for the strength and very consistency of His throne, others who likewise declare themselves to be redeemed

men; while the angels, and the other works of creation besides men, do stand at a wider distance from the throne, and occupy the place of the indiscriminate multitude. This, I say, is declared by the simple beholding of the economy and order of the heavenly council. And when from this we turn ourselves to consider the action which is done, several things suggest themselves at once to every thoughtful mind, The book in the right hand of the Great King is the one prize and guerdon which God challengeth all creation, visible and invisible, to come and take; but they dare not even look upon it, so utterly foiled are they by the challenge; till One, a Lamb that had been slain, but living still, who is seen everywhere up and down in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the four living ones, and in the midst of the four-and-twenty elders, being the living principle and vivifying heart of them all, doth take individual place and enter into action immediately after the proclamation of this challenge, and the astonished terror of all created beings and things on the hearing of the same: but He, the Lamb, moving forward, takes the book and doth with it according to His will. This demonstrates, first, that He is Head Person of heaven, above them all in strength and power, able to take up the challenge at the bare mention of which the hosts above fainted with weakness: secondly, that this book, whatever it is, doth invest Him with a supremacy over the redeemed Church, the unfallen angels, and all creation whatsoever; which do concur in one grand demonstration of fealty and homage, celebrating Him and worshipping Him, with what strains they celebrate and worship God himself who sitteth on the throne. These things, and much more, come directly and openly out from the scene and act placed under our eye in these introductory chapters. Then in the sixth and seventh chapters we have the effects which come upon the earth from His opening the several seals of the book, into which we cannot now enter particularly; but this is apparent upon the face of the narrative, that it ends in the expulsion of all the kings and mighty men and chief captains of the earth, from their delegated seats and places of authority under Christ, being terrified to death under the sixth seal, and full of awful apprehension of the seventh, they are utterly made away with (Rev. xix. 18, which, though in a different place, referreth to the same event as is referred to in vi. 15–17), in order to make room for Christ and His saints raised in the first resurrection, who possess for ever the thrones of the earth (xx. 4); being the fulfilment of that whereof their souls in glory were assured, so soon as ever He received the book (ver. 10): "And we shall reign on the earth." The action of opening the seals we can say, therefore, hath for its object the dispossessing of the present

rulers of the earth, and the bringing in of the redeemed saints to rule and to possess it. It is therefore the revelation of Christ, invested by His Father with the inheritance, and by successive demonstrations of His right, chasing out the usurpers, until, the devil himself being ejected, Christ, with His saints, do take the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven, to hold it for ever. Concerning the sealed nation, which is preserved in the direful destruction of nations, we discourse not at present, but shall show, that while the severe parts of the vision hath respect to the ten Papal kingdoms of Christendom, this gracious part hath respect to the Protestant kingdom of Great Britain, which is held up by this sealing for an example to all kingdoms to continue faithful, and so to escape the overwhelming deluge of the wrath of God and the Lamb. For how long, and to what extent, we shall afterwards discourse: but we observe at present, that, without an instance presented to all nations of God's grace and preservation in the judgment, the righteousness of God in not confounding the innocent with the guilty would not have been shown forth; but it would have seemed one indiscriminate act of destruction, freezing hope, and fixing action in the obduracy of fate. The latter part of the 7th chapter doth bring us back to the vision of the heavenly throne, no longer planted in the heavens, but abiding amongst men (ver. 15). And before it there is the great multitude of the nations, gathered out of the tribulations of Papal persecution, which answereth to the Church in the wilderness, and keeping the feast of tabernacles with joy and gladness, in commemoration of that glorious land into the possession of which they have been brought, after their long and wearisome wanderings. So that doubt remaineth not that the 7th chapter brings us down to the end of the Papal persecutions, as the 3d chapter brings us down to the end of the Pagan persecutions; and that the 8th chapter, which, as well as all from the 4th, concerns the things that are to be, must go back again to the time of Constantine, and reveal Christ acting in some other aspect, unto some other end, yet subordinate to that of His being the great heir of the earth, which is doubtless the one grand object of the second part of the book concerning future things.

The great use of this vision is, therefore, to teach the kings and magistrates of the earth under whom they exercise authority, and for whom. And how find we them? giving ear to the revelation contained in this vision? Would it were so. But, alas! this nation, which stood out for Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth, against the Pope who usurpeth that Divine prerogative, hath at length succumbed. And what now is the language of the nations? We are independent of the Prince of the kings of the earth; and

bring everything to pass, or not to pass, as we please, according to our might, wisdom, and policy. And even churchmen, certainly all sectarians and schismatics, do uphold that kings derive their power from the people, and for the people hold it; and further, with most open throat they do proclaim and promulgate forth that religion hath nothing to do with politics, and politics nothing to do with religion, and that any question, because it is political, ceases therefore to be religious. Ignorant panders to arbitrary irresponsible government, or to popular anarchy, study this vision of the Apocalypse, and be wise. Ah me! what an awful thing it is, that they should put in contrast the political and the religious, and by this most arrant blunder or knavery should have succeeded in advancing servants of the Pope, who hath his authority from the devil, to equal power and trust with servants of the true Protestant Church, which hath her authority from Christ the Son of the Most High God; all proving, even to our consternation, the immense ignorance, the direct error, and the fatal measures which the Church hath fallen into on the subject of this great vision, which revealeth Christ as the Prince of the kings of the earth. And I hesitate not to confess that one of the principal objects which drew me to this city at the present time, was to show out the principles of this great subject, to proclaim in the ear of the drowsy Church, and the rebellious nation, the rights and titles of my Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, who hath purchased the earth and the world by his perfect righteousness and spotless sacrifice upon the cross; and who, though now for a season hid with His Father, shall come forth again to honour those whom He finds honouring Him, and all who are giving His honour to another to destroy.

3. The next vision, being the third in order from the beginning of the book, and the second under the head of future things, opens in chap. viii. with the exhibition of Christ employed in fulfilling the High Priest's office on the day of atonement; and offering unto God the prayers of his persecuted and oppressed saints, of which prayers the substance is briefly set forth, vi. 10, to be judgment upon their adversaries, the oppressors and destroyers of the earth; and deliverance of the righteous into the possession of that inheritance of the earth which they have from the beginning had the promise of (Ps. xxxvii.; Matt. v. 5; Rom. iv. 13), and received the full assurance of, when the Lamb slain got possession of the seven-sealed book, Rev. v. 10. We are thereby led to think that this vision of trumpets is to reveal Christ as our High Priest in heaven, while the vision of candlesticks revealed Him as our High Priest on earth; because on the day of atonement the high priest of the Jews went into the most

holy place, the type of heaven, Heb. ix. 24: [that it is the action of the day of atonement we know by the golden censer which might be used on no other occasion]. In this thought, suggested by His action of offering out of His hand in the golden censer the prayers of saints, we are confirmed by looking at the consummation of the vision or the state of things attained by the seventh trumpet, which, as it is declared xi. 15–19, consisteth in these things: 1st, Christ's reign entered upon, and celebrated by His Church the joint-heirs of His kingdom, ver. 15–17. 2dly, The judging, righting, and rewarding of His servants the prophets, the saints, and them that fear His name, together with all the dead, great and small, who had died in the Lord. 3dly, The destruction of the nations who had so long destroyed the earth in the day of Christ's anger and wrath, Psal. ii., cx. 4thly, The opening of the temple in heaven, to the showing of the inmost recesses of the holy of holies, which I understand to be the manifestation of the heavenly things, the revealing of the inheritance, the coming down of the new Jerusalem. Being confirmed by the consideration of this which the vision consummates, I go back to the beginning and find that, besides the action of offering the prayers of saints, there is another action (ver. 5) of taking fire of the altar and casting it into the earth, whence arose voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake; whereupon seven angels go forth one after the other, and bring on seven woful inflictions of the wrath of Christ until His enemies and the enemies of His Church are utterly consumed from the earth. Now taking the interpretation of this symbol from Ezek. x. 2, where the casting of the fire upon the city of Jerusalem doth signify the destruction of its glory and its sanctity in the days of Nebuchadnezzar; and from Hos. viii. 1, where, as in all the Scriptures, the blast of the trumpet is the harbinger of woe; we come to this conclusion upon the whole, that the vision of trumpets is to reveal Christ in His character of effectual Intercessor for His saints, receiving power from God to avenge their death upon His enemies and theirs, and to bring them through great tribulations into the inheritance of the earth. If I err not, the whole vision of trumpets is but a commentary upon that text twice written in the prophet Isaiah concerning the day of atonement, which was also the day of redemption, when all bondsmen went free, and all inheritances returned to their proper possessors (Isa. xxxiv. 8; lxiii. 4): "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come:" both of which chapters do reveal that desolation of the Gentile Church (the cruel Edom or Esau) which shall make way for the return of the Jews: while our vision of the seven trumpets reveals the larger but parallel mystery of the destruction of

all apostate Christendom, and the casting out of the devil its master, and the opening of the prison-house of death where the bodies of the saints lie in loathsome bondage, and the redemption of the inheritance of the earth and their installation in the government and possession thereof as the royal priesthood who minister from the opened temple, the celestial city of the new Jerusalem, holiness and blessedness to the earth and all the inhabitants thereof.

I consider, therefore, that while the first vision sets forth Christ as Head of the Church, and the second, which extends over all the rest of the book, but specially includes the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters, doth set Him forth as the Inheritor of the earth; this third vision, in subordination to the second, doth set Him forth as doing seven actions of vengeance upon the oppressors of His Church and their inheritance, ending in their final expulsion from the face of day, or rather in their being put under His feet, and the feet of His saints. It is Christ the Intercessor, presenting the endurances of His people and receiving power from His long-suffering Father to bring one act of retribution after another upon the wicked, until at length He comes in person, under the seventh trumpet, to judge the quick, and to govern the survivors in righteousness during the millennium; after which, having judged also the dead, and cast the wicked into hell, He doth give up the mediatorial kingdom of the earth with all the sons of glory perfected and completed; in reward of which He, with His made kings and priests, doth receive from the Father the whole encircling universe, sun, moon, and every star, to govern and to possess in everlasting righteousness and blessedness.

And what serveth such a revelation to the Church? Much every way. It showeth Christ in His character of Judge, in which the Father hath constituted Him, (John v.,) but which we are too apt to sink in His character of Saviour. It shows Him Head of the evil as well as of the good, over Satan and the wicked dominant as well as over the Church and the righteous, bringer of all judgments which come, as well as of all bounties; in one word, Head over *all* unto His *Church;*—pouring out judgment, and for what reason? To avenge the truth. This is the end of the vision, to keep in the minds of men that Christ is to judge the world, that He who ruleth over all doth restrain the wickedness as well as patronise the good of all; even the same who is to stop in its high flood the wickedness of the wicked by the judgment of the quick at His coming, and to establish the pains and misery of the second death, which is the undoing and preventing of all iniquity, and all iniquitous things. All this coming judgment and woe upon the world is here set down in successive acts, to the end that the Church may properly understand and believe

that horrible pit from which she is herself delivered; and that she may be ever stirred up to preach grace and mercy, and salvation, from the wrath which is revealing itself more and more until the consummation, when the despised Saviour shall come as the righteous Judge who is to condemn the world, and to make good unto His saints that which they have committed to His trust. These are the objects of this the third part of the book, which hath also its realisation in time and place, to show that Christ is executing on a small progressive scale that wrath which He is at length to execute on the largest scale of God's righteous judgment: so that the Church rightly reading and apprehending these things, might be preserved from that falsest idea of a God all merciful, of a Saviour all grace, and that the gospel might be no encourager of licentiousness or of indifference, but a trumpet-alarm unto the world, in the midst of whose terrors there should be ever heard the still small voice of peace and salvation. Salvation is salvation from something. What is that something? "The day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." But will God not relent? This vision verifying itself in every successive trumpet, proves that He will accomplish it all. I would that preachers and people knew and felt that there is a power and holiness and righteousness in every word of God. For oft we preach, and they hear, as if there was no judgment; as if He had laid aside the thunderbolts of His power; which these seven successive strokes of judgments, almost all already arrived unto the earth, and being just about to close, are intended to make manifest.

Before proceeding to the fourth vision we may observe, that this third vision is contained in chap. viii., ix., and x., to verse 8, with which a new series of prophesyings is introduced. The seventh trumpet is, however, brought in out of its place, at chap. xi. 14, for reasons which we cannot enter upon here, but shall fully explain in their proper place. And yet these concluding verses of chap. xi. do not contain the particulars of the seventh trumpet, but only the consummation of good which is brought about by the action thereof: and herein they serve the same purpose which the concluding verses of chap. vii. did to the action of seals; each setting forth in their proper language the end and consummation of Christ's work and office, as it is severally represented by the symbols of these visions. But for the particulars of the seventh seal and seventh trumpet, which are parallel with one another, as indeed are the other seals and trumpets, they are in both cases suppressed at the place where they should properly have been given—namely, vii. 1, x. 4: being reserved until all the intermediate doings having been developed, as they are in chapters x., xi., xii., xiii., xiv., and the whole

causes for such a fearful act of wrath fairly set out; the act of the seventh seal and of the seventh trumpet, and the treading of the wine-press, (xiv. 20,) which are one act—the act of anger, the great day of wrath—might then be fully and distinctly laid out in chaps. xv. and xvi., and illustrated in chaps. xvii., xviii., and xix.: so that it may be truly said that the seventh seal and seventh trumpet, and the treading of the wine-press, do occupy five complete chapters of the Apocalypse, which stand immediately antecedent to the first resurrection, the reign of Christ, and the millennial blessedness, and the New-Jerusalem state of the world. This only is necessary to be remarked further, before leaving the vision of trumpets, that the facts or accomplishments of the several predictions are done upon the eastern half of the Roman empire, of which Constantinople is the head; whereas the seals have their proper locality in the western Roman empire, of which Rome is the head. This division of the fourth or Roman empire into two parts began from the time of Constantine, who gave the ground of it in the building of Constantinople, and in the subdivision of his empire into three parts: whence in this vision we have always a third part, and no more, affected by the several judgments. The sufficient grounds for believing that the scene of these two visions is different, while the action of them is contemporaneous from Constantine's time down to the coming of Christ, together with the ends served by this two-foldness, will more fully appear in the sequel of these lectures; but we mention it at present that the method and the substance of the book may be brought thus early under one point of view.

4. Now the fourth vision, which occupies the remainder of chap. x. from ver. 8, and the whole of chap. xi., except the verses containing the seventh seal, which are introduced there for the sake of synchronism, (that is, to mark the time of the slaying of the witnesses as being the same with the time of the seventh trumpet and the seventh seal,) and the whole of chapters xii., xiii., and xiv.;—this important vision doth chiefly concern the Church, which is set forth, first, by a woman, and then by a select company of one hundred and forty-four thousand standing upon Mount Zion. And her circumstances are laid out by the Church-symbols of the wilderness, the beast like a lamb, the harvest and the vintage, being introduced with a command to measure the temple and them that worship therein. Now the great question always is, What doth it reveal concerning Jesus Christ? This will, as in the former cases, be best understood by observing the manner of His appearance, which is given, x. 1; He descends from heaven "clothed with a cloud" as He ascended, and is to come again, (Acts i.;) "and a rainbow upon

His head," which was given to Noah as the sign of the covenant which God made with men for the safe possession of the earth, and the preservation of all flesh thereon, Gen. ix. 9–17. This rainbow assurance of the earth's perpetual safety from the destruction of water, is seen surrounding the throne of the glory of God in heaven, both by Ezekiel i. 28, and by John iv. 3, to signify that God remembereth His covenant with man for the earth; and the seven-sealed book, which imparteth the title to the inheritance He hath in His right hand. This book, the Lamb (Representative and Saviour of all flesh) having received and opened, He becomes proprietor of the earth; the true Noah, the Redeemer of the inheritance, whose work of presenting spotless flesh upon the cross, and rising again immortal, being foreseen, obtained for Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, and every other man, those terms of favour which God was pleased from time to time to give. Christ, the Purchaser and the Possessor and the Bestower of all redemption, being come, the sign of the covenant becometh His by right; and from around the throne the rainbow passeth to encircle His person, and show that He is the invested one, who shall yet inherit and possess all things. I think that the open book in His hand doth likewise point Him out to be the Redeemer of the inheritance; who, (Jer. xxxi. 10–13,) according to the custom, was possessed both of a sealed and an open book. The sealed book He receives in the presence of the elders, (ver. 9,) in virtue of being the Redeemer; and now He presents Himself with an open little book. Whether this be the sealed book now opened, or whether it be the other form of the evidence of the purchased redemption, is not at present to be inquired into; nor doth it affect the great result, that Christ appears at the head of this fourth vision in His character of Redeemer of the inheritance, clothed with all the rights thereof; and bent on the very purpose of taking possession of it. For He sets His one foot upon the earth, and His other foot upon the sea, and proclaims the age of time concluded, and the eternal age begun. Now, as we have already observed, though these visions of Christ's glory be set forth by a succession of acts, commencing from Constantine's time, this is only to keep attention alive and carry it forward to the great ultimate act, which attendeth upon Christ's coming or revelation; in the symbols of which He is always arrayed at the head of every vision;—at the head of the first, as the Lamb receiving in the presence, and with the adoration of all creatures, the title-deeds of universal creation, and exalted into the fellowship of the Father's throne; at the head of the second, as the High Priest on the day of atonement, which is the redemption of the Church out of her thraldom by the destruc-

tion of her enemies in the day of His appearing. And now at the head of this the third of the visions of future things, He is represented as coming in power and great majesty to take possession of the earth which He hath purchased and delivered. Accordingly, at the close of that vision (xiv. 14) we find that He comes seated on the cloud, to gather in the harvest of His people, and with His feet to tread the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God. We say, therefore, in general, that the object of this fourth vision is to present us with Christ, as the Head of the Church and the rightful Proprietor of the inheritance, coming to chase out of the earth every Antichristian pretender to the supremacy, and to bring Himself and His Church into the glorious and everlasting possession thereof. Accordingly, the great enemy of God and man (Rev. xii. 9) appears in three Antichristian forms; that of chap. xii. and chap. xiii. and chap. xvii., being, as we shall show, the Roman empire in its Pagan, its Papal, and its Infidel conditions, of which we have already seen two complete, and the initiation of the third under Napoleon, but wait for its completion in another mightier and more terrible than he, just about to arrive. Satan, embodied in the first of these three forms of Rome and its ten dependent kingdoms, doth set himself against the Church represented as a woman, whose seed or man-child—Christ not personal but Christ mystical, at least so many of the Church as suffered under Paganism,—doth overcome Him, and work a straitening of His condition, and a confinement of it to the earth. He then takes to himself the artifices and subtleties of superstition, and in the form of a lamb doth counterfeit the true Church, and guide the beast into the utterance of all blasphemies and the commission of all cruelties whatsoever. Meanwhile Christ, by means of His Church set forth during this Papal period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, by the symbol of the Jews in the temple, contradistinguished from the Gentiles in the outer court and city, (xi. 1,) and also by the one hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion, (xiv. 1,) who are the same as the sealed tribes, (vii.,) being, as we shall show, a Protestant Church and nation which had been redeemed from the Papal earth, (xiv. 4;) no other, indeed, than this British nation; by means, I say, of the British Church-nation which hath been in a state of Protestantism during all the period of the Papacy, and not from the time of Luther merely, Christ doth maintain His cause in an embodied form, fitted to withstand and counteract the embodied error in the other Papal kingdoms acting under Rome. And for this service our nation hath had the singular grace of being sealed from all the chastisements of infidelity inflicted on Papal Europe for nearly thirty years. When

the infidel form of Antichrist shall appear again in the glory of its strength and make war with the Lamb, (xvii. 14,) by whom the standard of the truth shall be upborne, it is not now the place to say expressly, because, being a future thing, it needeth much care to present it in its due form: but I may just hint, that I believe this honour is reserved for the kings from the East, for whose march I believe the way to be even now preparing, by the drying up of the waters of Euphrates, or the wasting away of the resources of the Turk, who for six or seven centuries hath held Israel's inheritance in his thraldom, and spread himself like an impassable river between the ten tribes and their inheritance. However this may be, it is enough for this sketch to have said that, during these three weary attacks of Antichrist, the Church, in the strength of her Captain, hath maintained the post, and will maintain it, till He shall come, who will come and will not tarry.

There is another view of the contents of this little book, which I think myself justified in thus early submitting as confirmatory of the above, and well combining with it, and necessary, indeed, to its complete explication, and derived from a source altogether different, and therefore the more strengthening to the conclusion. This little book, out of which all the prophecies concerning the beast and the woman, or Antichrist and the Church, cometh, is thus described, x. 9: "Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." And it is again repeated, ver. 10: "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." The particularity of this, without any use whatever of or reference to it afterwards, made me to suspect that an important link of connexion was in it, like that so often contained in several other seemingly extraneous things in the Apocalypse; and being at the head of the book, and characteristic of it, it seemed to me that it would have an importance proportionate to its place. Moved by this suspicion, whereof no one can estimate the force who is not well versed in the structure of the Apocalypse, I found that the same character belonged to Ezekiel's prophecy, and to it alone, at the head of which these words are written, (ii. 9, 10; iii. 1, 2:) "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein: and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll." And the effect which it produced upon him in

his belly, or inward parts, is thus described, (iii. 14:) "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me." This very remarkable coincidence led me to reflect a little more deeply upon the points of coincidence between Ezekiel's prophecy and this of John; and I perceived that as this is expressly to the Church and of the Church, so Ezekiel is commissioned to the Jewish Church, and to that only, (iii. 4–6.) Furthermore, I perceived this to be in one word the substance of Ezekiel's prophecy: The Shechinah or glory of the Church, (chap. i.,) the argument for removing it away from the children of Israel, (iii.–x.,) the removal of it, (x.,) the desolate condition of the Church in his state of privation and destitution, (xi.–xxxiv.,) the preparation for its return, (xxxiv.–xliii.,) and its final return and perpetual abode amongst them, (xliii.–end.) Ezekiel may be characterised as the prophet of the departure, the absence, and the return of the visible manifest glory of God to the Jewish Church and nation. That the Shechinah, or glorious Presence which led the children of Israel out of Egypt, and settled with them in the most Holy Place of the tabernacle and temple, should be removed, was an event of such fearful import as must have entirely overwhelmed the Church; but for the previous prediction of it by a prophet, to whom, this office being fulfilled, God gave to predict also the re-edifying of His temple, and the return of His glory thereto, never to depart from it any more. Returning with this information, which I believe to contain the true and characteristic honour of Ezekiel as a prophet, I find that the little book of the Apocalypse, sweet and bitter, hath exactly the same intention by the Christian Church: which it first presenteth (xii. 1.) in the glory of those resurrection-raiments with which Christ invested her in the days of apostles, and which wore not out till after, by her body of martyrs, she had overthrown Paganism from the supremacy. Soon thereafter the glory departed: and the next vision represents that same woman who had fled into the dreary wilderness, to escape the rage of the beast, and had abidden there for 1260 years, coming right lovingly up thence as his paramour and his prostitute. This is the condition of the Church with her glory departed; under which, with the exception of the sealed nation, she has continued over all the ten kingdoms which are the bounds of this prophecy, during the twelve hundred and sixty years of the Papacy. This inglorious and adulterous Church being removed by consuming judgments (for she, being the free wife, cannot be treated by chastisement merely for her adultery, like the bond-wife of the Jewish Church, but must be put to death,) the true glorious bride of the

Lamb, which is the New Jerusalem, with the glory of God, descendeth from above and abideth for ever. So that the little book as contradistinguished from the seven seals and seven trumpets, doth contain nothing else than the Christian form of Ezekiel's prophecy, the glory in which the Church is habited at first, its departure, and therewith the departure of her honour; its return and eternal abode upon her in the New Jerusalem for ever and ever.

Now it seemeth to me that these two ideas being combined together: first the controversy of Christ in His Church with Satan in the apostasy, for the possession of the inheritance which He hath purchased and claimed for her; and, secondly, the lamentable picture of the degradation and abandonment into which she was to fall, and utterly to perish, in order to make way for the election according to grace gathered into glory;—these two views, taken together, do, I think, contain the object and intention of the little open book, which is contained substantially in chaps. xii., xiii., xiv., and hath its last act of Babylon's destruction opened and explained in chaps. xvii., xviii., xix. Chap. xi. is an introduction to, and summary of, its contents, yet most full of all manner of references, both to the other parts of this book, and to the other books of Scripture; answering to the dove-tailing which bind the timbers of a house, or the hooks and clasps which joined the coverings and veils of the tabernacle. It presents the Church under the figure of the Holy City with its temple; all of which, except the temple itself, is for 1260 years trodden down of the Gentiles. This is throughout all Scripture the period of the little horn of the beast, (Dan. vii.,) that is, the Papacy. Against this profanation of the Gentiles of Christendom, two witnesses testify, clothed in sackcloth, which are the two olive-trees and candlesticks of Zechariah. Now Zechariah the prophet is chiefly taken up with the fate of Jerusalem and its temple, almost from the beginning to the ending of his prophecy. As the Shechinah of glory is the key to Ezekiel, so the building and condition of Jerusalem is the key to Zechariah. This is shown in the introduction to the book (chap. i. 19; chap. ii.) answering to Rev. xi. 1; in Zech. iii., iv., we have the two witnesses, Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel, prophesying in the midst of the city trodden down by Babylon, and occupied with the re-edification of the temple; answering to Rev. xi. 3–6. Then at the conclusion of Zechariah, (chaps. xii., xiii., xiv.) we have Jerusalem reduced to great extremities at the last; and out of the article of death, yea, out of death itself (xiv. 1, 2), she ariseth to great and eternal glory (xiv. 8, to the end); answering, as I conceive (in what way I say not), to that earthquake shock, and destructive beast out of the bottomless pit

(Rev. xi. 13), after which great glory arriveth to the witnesses of God, and the full and free inheritance of the whole earth is by the seventh trumpet proclaimed. Now besides bringing us into conference with the prophet Zechariah, this chapter doth connect the Church history of the little book with the trumpet history, and, through this, with the seals. While also it doth give us the first notice of the infidel power, arising from the bottomless pit, to slay the witnesses which the Gentiles of Christendom had only clothed in sackcloth, but not in any way hurt or maimed. With respect to the 12th and 13th chapters, they carry us directly to the 7th chapter of Daniel, which is again by its times connected with the 10th, 11th, and 12th, and by its symbols with the 8th, and by intrinsic evidence with the 2d; so that we may say, these two chapters of the Apocalypse do bring us into conference with almost the whole of Daniel. But chap. xiv., which is a regular succession of the Jewish feasts and seasons, the first-fruits, the harvest, and the vintage, doth bring us into conference with the whole Mosaic ordinances, especially with the great feasts thereof. And thus it is that this Church history is written in the emblems, and full of the prophets of the former Church. I have dwelt the more upon this point, in order to show how much interwoven with the other Scriptures is this precious book of the Apocalypse, and what light it reflects upon them; and how necessary to the interpretation of it is the knowledge of God's most holy Word, whereof it is as the key-stone clenching with its fine adaptation and great strength the whole fabric of the Divine testimony. That stone in the arch which serveth this end of stability and confirmation, is called the KEY-*stone;* that book in the scheme of God's Word which serveth the same end, is called the *Apocalypse*, or the KEY-book.

Thus, then, these streams of historical events starting from the same origin in time, the era of Constantine at the beginning of the fourth century (the time preceding containing the things that are, and the time following the things that are to be i. 20,—this the prospect, that the being and constitution of the Church), namely, the seven seals realised in the Western, the seven trumpets realised in the Eastern Roman Empire, and the little open book realised partly in both, and because the Eastern Church came early to its end, chiefly in the West,—these three coeval and collateral streams of events, coming down through nearly 1500 years, do reunite in the last great catastrophe of the seventh seal, seventh trumpet, and seven vials, which bring destruction direful and complete upon the infidel government and apostate church, the beast and false prophet of Christendom. This event of consummate destruction is contained in the 15th and 16th chapters as to the order of it, and further opened

as to the particulars of Babylon's destruction in chap. 17 and 18; and as to the particulars of the beast's destruction in chap. xix. from ver. 11. But the intervening verses at the beginning of chap. xix. do show us how, when the adulterous mother of harlots is removed with the besom of destruction, the true Church and pure bride of Christ prepares herself to come down from heaven and take possession; but first her Lord must come forth as the Man of War, according to the order of that Epithalamium or marriage song, the 45th Psalm, according to the order also of that song of triumphal entry into the everlasting habitation of the New Jerusalem and its holy temple, the 24th Psalm. And the rest of the book contained in chaps. xx., xxi., xxii. are the marriage consummated, the New Jerusalem possessed. But this last vision casts so much light upon the whole purpose of God, being its glorious consummation, that we deem it right to include it under a fifth head of the subject-matter of the book.

5. The fifth great division of the subject-matter of this book is the consummation to which all the rest doth tend. The title, "Revelation of Jesus Christ;" the exordium, "Behold he cometh with clouds," &c.; the first vision whereof every promise made by the Spirit to the churches looketh to a state of things upon the earth at or after His coming, and in His kingdom; the seven-sealed book, which is the title-deeds of the inheritance of the earth; the seven trumpets, which is Christ's consuming wrath upon the usurpers of it; the little book, which is the controversy with Antichrist for the possession of it;—all these have no meaning, but in the anticipation and fore-view of this fifth act of revelation, which is contained in the last three chapters of the book, and is looked forward to and held out in every promise whatsoever which the book contains, and I may say which Scripture contains from the beginning to the ending of it. And what then is this most excellent of all the revelations of God? It is the exhibition of the redeemed earth under the government and administration of the Redeemer, and the Redeemer's bride the New Jerusalem, which is His Church, the election according to grace, the martyrs, the witnesses, the saints great and small, who have not forsaken the law of their God, but overcome the enemies of God and of the Lamb. Blessed consummation of this weary and sorrowful world! I give it welcome, I hail its approach: I wait its coming more than they that watch for the morning. Over the wrecks of a world I weep; over broken hearts of parents, over suffering infancy, over the unconscious clay of sweet innocents, over the untimely births who have never seen the light, or have just looked upon it, and shut their eyes for a season, until the glorious light of the resurrection-morn. Oh, my Lord, come away! Hasten with Thy con-

gregated ones. My soul desireth to see the King in His beauty, and the beautiful ones whom He shall bring along with Him; when I shall see these sweet babes, snatched from a parent's weeping eyes, and a parent's sorrowful, yet joyful heart. "Sorrow not as others which have no hope, for those which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Now, this consummation of all our hopes, and conclusion of all our trials, in which I so greatly rejoice, is set forth, as it seems to me, under two aspects; the one looking unto the governed, the other unto the governors; the one describing the condition of the earth and the nations upon it, the other describing the condition of the New Jerusalem and the raised saints which are therein; the one revealing Christ as King of men in flesh and blood, sitting on David's throne, and from thence ruling all thrones and dominions of men,—the other revealing Christ as Head and Husband of the Church in the New Jerusalem, dwelling with His bride—Emmanuel, God with us. Which division, to exhibit still more distinctly, it is necessary to bear in mind, that though the earth and the nations be brought into that blessedness, everywhere prophesied of in Scripture as attendant on the coming of the Lord, still it is not the eternal condition of its blessedness, but an intermediate stage thereto, wherein Christ and His raised saints, the Church, are exhibited triumphant over their enemies,—kings and priests over a subjugated world, which they bless with infinite blessings, in reward of those infinite sufferings which they endured upon it in the days of their flesh, by the glorious triumphs of grace. Yet still is the earth under the law of growth and decay, and the animals under the law of death, and man likewise, but such a death as Christ hath power over, and not the devil; a death for judgment of wickedness, for preservation of righteousness; in one word, death the executioner of the holy king, the servant, not the monarch, of things created. While this is the state of the redeemed earth, blooming in beauty, rife with happiness, and all redolent with the holy incense of joy, such is not the state of the habitation of the redeemed, the city of the great King, the New Jerusalem, which cometh down from above, into which nothing entereth that defileth or maketh a lie, where there is no death, where God's tabernacle is with men, where is the light inaccessible and full of glory. This is the antitype of Eden, in the midst of an uncultivated yet sinless world; the antitype of the Holy of Holies, separated by an impassable veil from the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High, which is the land of Judea, and from the court of the Gentiles, which is the rest of the world no longer profaned Here, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, whither

flesh and blood cannot enter, we have God and the Lamb, and the four beasts and four-and-twenty elders (which are the Church of the first-born);—in one word, we have the vision of the fourth chapter made visible or present on the earth, the reality of the heavenly court and government clothed upon with the glorious flesh of the first resurrection; all angels attendant upon this eternal and unchangeable residence of the God-man and His Church, and all creatures having their blessedness suspended from the same. And to the intent that not only the beings intelligent may be blessed with the knowledge and sight of that blessed condition to which their faithfulness shall at length come, but also that they may have a kindred hope for the inanimate and organic creation, upon whose goodly fruits their life is sustained, this city of the blessed is presented in those clarified and most glorious forms of unchangeable matter, wherein there shall be no decay or death, nor sinful stain, nor ray of darkness, nor harbour of evil, nor occasion of temptation, nor accident, nor fallibility, but God's attributes shall stand ever glorified therein, and man's service ever done thereby; creation redeemed, creation united unto Christ, and in Him beautified, and in Him blessed, and with God's own countenance lighted up, without stain or wrinkle, or any such thing. Of this the unity of creation blessed, the New Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven at the coming of Christ, is the form and subsistence, in itself the subsistence, and to all other parts of creation the form of their hope, the reality of that spiritual and immortal blessedness whereto they may through faithfulness attain. That same office which the risen body of Christ doth now serve unto the Church, being the ground of their hope of a resurrection, will the New Jerusalem serve to the world after the coming of Christ, being the ground of their hope of spiritual glory; the only difference being, that the body of our hope is not now visible, because this is a dispensation of faith, whereas the body of theirs will be visible, because it is a dispensation of sight. And as we now receive a first-fruits of life and nourishment in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, granted to our faith upon Christ's risen body, so shall they receive out of that New Jerusalem, that blessedness of every kind which they enjoy, granted unto their faith, and hope, and desire of that fulness of spiritual blessedness, in which the Church that reigneth therein is instated under Christ, and in union with Christ her Head.

I may not enter into these things in detail, but have thought so much necessary for the understanding of that double picture of blessedness which is contained in the last three chapters of the book; the former in chaps. xx. and xxi. down to verse 9; the latter from thence down to verse 6 of chap. xxii.; and the remaining verses

do contain the solemn sanctions and injunctions with which Christ sendeth forth this book, blessed and defended, at once its treasure of precious blessings and its armoury of defensive weapons, of both which this generation is alike unmindful. Now, the first of these delineations hath a history; but the last hath none, nor can have, because it is unchangeable. The earth, on which mortal men do dwell, and mutable creatures exist, is capable of change, and therefore of a history, the history of its events, until it be brought into the condition of the New Jerusalem, which is unchangeable. And this we have recorded in the language of time or change; but the New Jerusalem, in the language of eternity and unchangeableness. The events of the history are these:—The two forms of Antichrist, the beast and the false prophet, being taken alive and cast into the lake of fire, and the kings of the earth confederate under their banners, being slain; the devil, prime mover of the earth's wickedness and misery, is restrained in chains within the bottomless pit, and straightway the first resurrection ensueth, and Christ with His risen saints takes the reins of the government of the earth. The earth, thus delivered from the headship of Satan and wicked men, rejoiceth in great blessedness, under the headship of Christ and righteous men raised from the dead. And being thus constituted under Christ and His saints, men have the power of going themselves to Him as a head of sustentation; for the work of redemption is then complete. All are redeemed, earth and every creature and the souls and bodies of men upon the earth are redeemed, from the power of all captivity; but still there is a work of faith, which is to acknowledge Christ as the author of this redemption, and to join themselves to Him after what way Adam might and ought to have done; and the angels that fell not did. And they shall in general do so, and so doing shall exhibit that blessedness which God bestoweth upon creatures who are frail and mutable, through their dependence upon Christ. There shall be exceptions, (Isa. lxv.;) and these exceptions shall, I conceive, go down to the pit quick, shall be judged with instantaneous judgment, to the end it may be truly a kingdom of righteousness. And thus shall things stand constituted for the period of the thousand years—whether literal years we say not, nor doth it at all concern us, but certainly a limited time, however short or long, and certainly not shorter than a thousand literal years. At the end of which finite time, the wickedness of men haply increasing, and the grace of God being accomplished, Satan shall be loosed, and men in this better condition shall be tried; and it shall appear that except the Jewish people, who are under a covenant of their own, (Ezek. xvi.,) all the nations, envious haply of that distinction, and disobedient to their

supremacy, shall give way, and come up in proud revolt to try their might against the people of God's covenant, and against His holy city, which hath its seat within these bounds. This last confederacy of evil is written in the language of Ezekiel's vision of Gog and Magog, (chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix.,) and will find its best illustrations from that confederacy of the nations against Israel settled in their own land, before the Millennium commenceth. Then it is that God shall interfere and show His mighty power in Christ, who shall consume them with fire out of heaven. This fire of destruction to the wicked shall be also the fire of purgation to the earth, accomplishing the completeness of that purification of the heaven and the earth, and total destruction of the elements of change and trouble which is mentioned in the third chapter of 2 Peter, and every other part of Scripture, and of which the fires of the beginning of the Millennium are only a partial and limited foreshowing. Out of the bosom of this grand act of conflagration and purification, shall the bodies of the dead arise, from the earth into the mid-heaven, and receive their sentence of final settlement, some being doomed unto the lake outside of creation, others to the several dignities and governments in creation under Christ and the Church and the New Jerusalem, and the infallible earth which shall for ever hold the metropolitan dignity of the works of creation. That lake of fire, hell, the second death, great grave of being, dread monument of sin and wickedness, is, I think, spoken of in Scripture as without: "the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" "without are dogs," &c. But creation itself is represented as all redeemed: "all things in heaven and earth are recapitulated unto Christ," (Eph. i.) This is the history of the death of death, the undoing of the undoer, the destruction of the destroyers, the perdition of a rebellious will, the eternal monument of the wrath of God, the great negative by which the great positive hath been demonstrated. And herewith concludes the history of this earth, the great arena whereon the debate between good and evil hath been carried on; and its great pilgrimage to eternal blessedness, signed and sealed in the blood of Christ, is ended. And God doth honour those who have stood the fiery brunt of such fearful controversy, and done this work of pioneering the creature's road to infallibility, by appointing them kings and priests over the various orbs that swim in space, and are bound together by the unity of the one law of gravitation. Perhaps each of them the living head of a living race, each the vicar for Christ over a world, over all which He is the Head. But again I must restrain myself till the proper place for the details.

Such is a sketch, my Christian brethren, of the subject-matter of

the Revelation of Jesus Christ, over which, when I cast my eye, I know not whether wonder or delight possess me more—wonder at the immensity of the truth which it contains, or delight at perceiving the harmony, the unity of the whole. It is a mighty work which I have undertaken; but I would not shun either the labour or the responsibility of it. I do engage myself, O my Teacher, in the confidence of Thy instruction; for I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of Thy great name. Thy providence was strange, and very gracious was Thy will in drawing me to the study of this book—very good hast Thou been in furnishing me with every help: and why should I doubt that Thou wilt enable me to overcome every difficulty, and to present unto Thy Church such an exposition of it as may evidence the knowledge Thou hast given me in Thy mystery, and put to silence the slanders of misjudging and unbelieving men; as may show unto Thy Church the unspeakable treasures of wonder and goodness which lie here unheeded by many; by too many despised, and only by a very few prized aright.

IV. And now we come to the fourth and last head of the lecture, which is to lay before you the sanctions or obligations of the Revelation under which it ought by me to be expounded, and by you to be listened to. And without repeating anything which hath been said above upon the title, authority, and substance of this book, I observe that everything already advanced is of the nature of the most sacred sanction and binding obligation to every believer. If it be sufficient at any time to command attention to know that it is God who speaketh the word, how much more when God sendeth that word for our information, upon that subject which is the joy and the desire of a Christian's heart, the coming of the Lord. The thing spoken, as well as the person who speaketh it, should then bind us with breathless attention to hear and to keep the saying. When to this is added, that it comes from the hands of our crucified and risen Lord, being one of those resurrection gifts which He received from the Father, and, upon receiving, communicated to His Church by the mediation of His angel, some principal one of the saints in glory, and of the Apostle John, the most beloved of the Church on earth,—uniting God, Christ, the Church in glory, and the Church on earth, in one sweet fellowship of love,—methinks a new sanction of a most extraordinary kind is added to it. And, finally, when to God the author, Christ the subject and the most honourable channel of its transmission, is added the manifoldness of its details, the deep mysteries of the Godhead which it opens, the offices and actions of Christ which it reveals; the revolutions of Christendom already

past, which it explains, and yet to come, which it foretells; and the sure and certain signs of the day of the world's redemption, which it hangs out in full view, that it may not overtake us as a snare;—it is a most amazing thing that the Church should not have bound it about her neck, and written it upon the tablet of her heart. But God, foreseeing the end from the beginning, and wishing to prevent, by all means consistent with human responsibility, the catastrophe of the Church, which is fast drawing on through unbelief of, or indifference to, that glory which is fast approaching, hath set in various parts of the book sanctions which are not to be found in any other book of Scripture. And these it shall now be our endeavour to lay before you.

We arrange them under three heads: first, The sanction of blessing; secondly, The sanction of knowledge; and thirdly, The sanction of fear.

1. The sanction of blessing is contained in these words (i. 3): "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand;" and in these words (xxii. 7): "Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Than this sacred benediction, with which the book is so solemnly opened and concluded, there can be nothing higher or better, or more worthy to commend it to the minds of His people. It is not like those benedictions with which the apostolical epistles are ordinarily introduced; being not the general expression of good will and invocation of grace and peace, but a positive and special promise of blessing resting upon the book itself, which cannot, so far as I remember, be found appropriated to any other book of Scripture whatsoever. Nor is it in the room and stead of the ordinary apostolical benediction, which we find given in verse 5 by the apostle unto the churches, to whom he was commanded to send the precious gift in deposit, or rather in trust for circulation amongst all the churches of Christ. The blessing, therefore, twice repeated, is nothing else than a sanction given to this book, in order to preserve it safe in the heart, and holy in the veneration of the Church: and it consisteth of two parts: the one the promise, the other the reason of it. The promise is unto him that readeth or peruseth, which I consider to have a special reference to the office-bearers, the ministers, and doctors, and readers of the Church, whose office it is to choose out, in the public services of the Church, the parts of Scripture to read, and to prelect upon in the hearing of the people. It doth in like manner apply to heads of families, to masters of schools, and all others to whom the same dignity appertaineth. And

let all such know that, despite of vulgar prejudices, and even ecclesiastical examples, there is a blessing in preferring rather than in postponing this book to the other books of Scriptures. I say ecclesiastical example, because, if I err not, there is not one of the lessons of the Church of England taken from the Apocalypse. For this exclusion I cannot well account; but certainly it hath been sorely punished in those frequent attempts of ignorant churchmen to bring about an alliance or union between her and the Roman harlot. The remedy ought to be promptly applied by the extraordinary diligence of her ministers to take a larger proportion of their subjects of discourse from this book. Now I can trace a very marked contrast between the feelings towards the Revelation which I find in Scotland and in England. In my native land it is looked to as the most profound and deeply concerning book of Scripture, and for a minister to take his subjects of discourse from it endears him to the people. In this, the land of my abode, which I have much reason to honour, I find that, as well in the Church as amongst the Sectaries, there is a decided preference of the other Scriptures; and I am told it is not unusual both in schools and in families to pass this book over in their ordinary readings. Against all such undervaluings I present these words of the eternal and unchangeable God: "Blessed is he that readeth the words of this prophecy;" and the man who giveth no heed to God thus promising a blessing upon that which should of itself be our delight, will not give much heed to a creature's voice: and if he did, it were only to enhance his sin in rejecting the voice of God for the voice of a man. But, oh reader! after these words have met thine eye, know that if thou be not desirous and delighted to read this book, thou rejectest the blessing of thy God, and settest His good and gracious promise at nought. Of what kind the blessing is, will better appear in the sequel.—"Blessed also are they that hear the words of this prophecy." This hath reference to the congregations, or families, or audiences of any kind, in whose hearing the chapters and verses of this book are read out, for the subject of lectures or sermons, or simply for a lesson of Divine truth. And it ought to carry its weight with all upon whom God's name is named, and who take upon them the profession of Christ Jesus. I trust it proceeds from my own caution and timidity, rather than from any real dislike among the people, but certain it is I have an intuitive perception, or a suggestion of the Spirit, almost every time I preach from this book, leading me to put forward this promise of God as my warrant, and their encouragement to hear me patiently. And after all my caution, O my soul, declare how, by the learned and the unlearned amongst the ministry, by the

pious and profane amongst the people, I have been treated as a fool and a babbler, or something worse, for my perseverance in this cause. But be thou patient, win thine own crown, and be an example as well as a voice unto this incredulous and doubting generation. Let me find acceptance amongst you, O ye children of the daughter of my people! I bring with me a heart both leal and true to the kingdom and the Church of Scotland. I come amongst you in the name of the Lord, seeking nothing but that together we may inherit this blessing: you of hearing, I of reading and expounding this blessed book.

But this is not all: something more than reading and hearing is necessary, in order to win the prize of this blessing, which is added in these words, "And keep those things which are written therein." These are not words of course, but describe some very high degree in the school of Christ, as is manifest from the words of the demonstrating angel, Rev. xxii. 9: "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book." Now, it is no mean degree to be placed in the same company with the angel of Christ, with His beloved disciple, and with the prophets: and it doth indicate to me this great truth, that under the expression, "the keeping of the sayings of this book," God doth contain such an act of faith as under our dispensation is parallel with the faith of the prophets under the Old Testament, and of the apostles under the New; that this book is the Christian prophecy, to keep which, in every age of the Church, will try men's faith, as the faith of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the old prophets were tried. For in no other way can I find the worthiness of coupling those who keep it with the ancient prophets and with John. I do see, moreover, in this use of the expression by the demonstrating angel, that another great truth is taught us—namely, that as that heavenly angel was Christ's messenger, to proceed forth into the visible spheres, and as John was Christ's messenger to the visible Church, and as the prophets had been God's messengers to the various nations to which they were sent, so those who keep the sayings of this book should be His messengers to the generations of men, in the midst of which they should be called. For how otherwise could there be any fellowship of service between them and the angels? It is not a fellowship of mere dignity, but a fellowship of dignity arising from the commonness of the service. "I am fellow-servant of thine, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the sayings of this book." Between the angel, the apostle, the prophets, and the keepers of the sayings of this book, there must be a community of service: and this is the principle which we would lay hold of for explaining what is signi-

fied by the word "keeping;" for there is no difficulty in the other words, "the things written therein." Keeping must signify such a conservation and preservation of it in our hearts, as that no power, visible or invisible, shall be able to bereave us of the faith thereof, or prevent us from expressing and acting thereupon. He riseth into the noble degree of a conservator of this prophecy's integrity, who is not ashamed of the testimony thereof, nor hesitates to express his belief, by referring to this book, but rather seeks occasion so to do, and finds pleasure when such an occasion arrives. What will ye say to this, my heedless brethren, who look askance upon everything which deriveth itself from this dubious source? Oh, my God! when these Thy promises I meditate upon, I seem to myself to have done no adequate honour to this blessed book: and in time to come I ask Thy grace to enable me both to be more faithful and bold for Thy sake, and for the sake of a heedless, unbelieving generation of men. Now that I see the power and meaning of this blessing, I will serve Thee for the inheritance of it: by keeping the prophecy, and ever declaring it, I will humbly seek to attain the good degree of being a warning voice, a prophetic voice to the people where Thou castest my lot. And oh! make this word of Thy servant to enkindle in many hearts the glorious ambition of being fellow-servants with the prophets, and with the apostles, and with the angel which showed these things!—If now I be asked to give some more particular description of what the blessing here promised is, and why such ones should only partake thereof, this will appear in the other part of this sanction, which is the reason of it expressed by these words, "for the time is at hand;" and in the parallel passage by these words, "Behold I come quickly."

The reason why the coming of Christ is described as being about to be in *a short time*, we have explained under the second head, by showing that this is merely a relative expression of which God only can judge the propriety, who knoweth the times and seasons before appointed; and that seeing He hath chosen thus always to speak, men had better not cavil, but meekly reverence His word: but why this speedy coming should be in both cases connected with the blessing, is another question upon which we have an observation or two to make, in order completely to elucidate the nature of this sanction. For my part, I can see no connexion between the blessedness of keeping the sayings of this book and the coming of Christ, except in believing that the blessedness which cometh with Him shall in some way or other fall to the lot of those who are full of the perusal and the faith of this revelation of Jesus Christ. And if this book be written, according as its name bears, on express purpose to unfold the com-

ing of Jesus Christ, it is but reasonable to believe that without careful heed to its instruction, that glorious event will drop out of our mind. For if the Church might keep that blessed event in mind without the constant help of this book, why was it given, and why hath it in its name embodied the claim to do this thing which no other book of Scripture doth claim to do—namely, to show unto God's servants the coming of Jesus Christ? I am the more confirmed in this opinion, that the blessedness here spoken of is no vague nor general good, but the particular good attendant upon the hope and realised in the coming of Christ, by two considerations: the first, that the blessing of Christ's second advent is always described as pertaining to those who look for Him, to those who watch for His coming, to those who are ready to receive Him with oil in their lamps, to those who are keeping their garments, &c.; whereas the miserable judgments of that awful event are described as alighting upon all others who are not filled with this glorious hope. And, as if to show us that it depends upon no other thing whatever, those taken into glory and those left to shame, are represented as being in all other respects the same, grinding at the same mill, walking together in the same field, and sleeping in the same bed. From which I am led to believe that at the time of our Lord's coming every other anchor of the soul shall have failed men in the antecedent or accompanying perils, and this only shall be holding against the stream-tide of infidelity and wickedness. I believe, though this be not the place to demonstrate it, that the hope of the Lord's instant coming shall distinguish all who in that day shall obtain redemption. And if so, we may well understand how much blessedness resteth upon the reading of this book. Let it be remembered that this book, though it contain many precedent and consequent events, hath yet as its avowed and capital object the very event of Christ's coming, which like a pearl of great price it doth set and enclose in a splendour of circumstance worthy of its grandeur, and which are to be the harbingers and attendants of its noblest state; and being so, I think that amongst the rest might well stand blessings upon that book which alone should preserve the glorious advent from entire oblivion. If now any one be puzzled to comprehend how this blessing should attend upon all times and persons in the ages which have occurred since it was written, they will be relieved by considering that the book doth dress out the glorious event unto the faith of men, without reference to time or place; and that every one who apprehendeth it with faith hath the blessing, whenever that blessing shall in time and place be manifested: all the generations that have passed, as well as the generation that then is. It is no part of the revelation of

Jesus Christ to make manifest the very day or time of His coming, which were to destroy its efficacy, but to give forth its glorious certainty, together with all the blessedness unto all things, and especially unto the Church attendant thereupon. The other consideration which leads to this same interpretation of the blessedness is, that in this book this expression, "Blessed is he," hath in it a sort of formal application to the time of the coming of the Lord. For examples, take these: Rev. xiv. 13, "Blessed are the dead from henceforth." Now the very next action is Christ's coming in the clouds to gather His people out of the earth before the vintage of wrath. Rev. xvi. 15, "Behold I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." And immediately vengeance is done upon Babylon. Rev. xix. 9, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb," which is the New-Jerusalem estate when Christ is with His Church on the earth. Rev. xxii. 7, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." How blessed? by being admitted to that marriage-supper; by being found keeping their garments; by being gathered with the sickle of Him who sits upon the cloud, into the garner of God. Now, believing brethren, think you what a sanction this is; what a blessing is here held out to your constant perusal and faithful keeping of the sayings of this book! It is your ark of salvation against the stormy winds and sapping streams of infidelity, which are overthrowing the house of those who will not rest on this only foundation. Justification by faith is become anything and everything, but that which it is in the Gospel and the articles of the Church. And of the Spirit as a Person, and the Servant of the Man Christ Jesus, we may say with the Samaritans, "We have not even heard whether there be a Holy Ghost:" and of the Trinity it may be no longer spoken or preached, but with an aspect of profound ignorance and devout helplessness: and of the sacraments it is monstrous to speak otherwise than as empty signs: and everything else most precious in our doctrine is worn away by the spirit of infidelity; and one only rough hard truth remaineth, which no metaphysics can adulterate, that Jesus Christ is to come again in flesh, and take the government of the world upon Himself. Yet in this one seed of truth there is a pregnancy that will restore all the rest from the shadowy emptiness into which they have been brought. Therefore "Blessed is he that readeth, and they who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the sayings that are written in this book; for the time is at hand.—Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the words of this prophecy."

2. The second sanction which I propose to all men for perusing

this book, is the sanction of the knowledge, the saving knowledge which they will assuredly derive from it. And this I build upon these words: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand," (xxii. 10.) I believe, upon this solemn attestation of God, that the Apocalypse is not a sealed book; and that all the doctors of the Church, with all the enemies of Christ to help them, cannot seal it: and as an unsealed and unsealable book I take it up to read it; surely believing that—let wise men and prudent men say what they please, and do what they please—it is a book unsealed and open, a patent book to the babes in Christ Jesus, which no power earthly dare, which no power in hell can, and which no power in heaven will seal. And this assurance I receive from God as a great, a very great boon; knowing that it was not wont to be so with the prophecy in the old time concerning which it is said by the mouth of Daniel xii. 4, "Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end:" and again, ver. 9, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." With this compare the corresponding passage of the Apocalypse now before us: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; to give unto every man according as his work shall be," (xxii. 10, 11.)

Of the command not to seal the prophecy of this book, I have to say simply, that I believe it is effectual, like every other word of God; and that the sayings of this book neither are nor can be sealed to him that believeth, ay, and never have been sealed to any believer. Sealed *indeed* they have been, and still are, to many called believers, and as such regarded by those who measure themselves by themselves; but nevertheless they are not sealed. Let God be true, and let every man be a liar: let God be Almighty, and let all creatures be as nothing before Him. And seeing He hath said, "Seal not the book," I say, "It is not sealed, and cannot be sealed;" and the same will maintain against all doctors, councils, and assemblies of the Church. Without any apparatus of commentators or accomplishment of learning, a believer should go to and read it, using for his keys these two—faith and hope; faith that it is an open book, and hope that it is a book full of blessing. But if men, instead of serving themselves with these blessed keys,

will go about to believe that the book is dark and obscure, and without commentators unintelligible; then what shall I say, but that, denying God's asseverations and holding Him a liar, they will reap a harvest of lies into their own bosom; and come forth from their studies more perplexed and entangled than they went into them? And is not this the case with most of the commentators who have entered upon it, with almost every Christian who reads it? There lurketh in the background of their minds a feeling that it is a forlorn hope to which they are giving themselves,—a set of desperate men who have adventured upon a desperate undertaking. And what can such a spirit of contradiction to God's commandment obtain for itself, but confusion worse confounded, darkness that may be felt? Is God thus to be mocked, who hath said, "Seal it not?" and who is he that hath said, "Seal it?" Out upon you, ye men-worshippers! ye God-despisers! How dare you take upon you to call that book a mystery which God hath named a revelation; that book a lock which God hath named a key; that book a sealed book which God hath written unsealed for ever?

While I thus rebuke the spirit of scepticism with which this book is read, even by the faithful and holy, and am zealous for God's service, and for the Church's good, I am far from encouraging rashness in myself or in any one. From this we are well defended by the next sanction, which is that of fear, contained in xxii. 18, 19. I do not say that every one, or any one, is to be let into the whole matter contained in this body of Christian prophecy. But I do say, that it is the open book of Church-prophecy, out of which every Christian will obtain that insight into the future hopes and expectations of the Church which is needful for his soul's salvation. It is one thing to open the door of a spacious temple, and another thing to say that every one who enters therein shall be able to comprehend the whole Divinity who is worshipped there. But because no one person can with his mind attain unto the vastness of the revealed Godhead, any more than with his body he can fill the arched, vaulted, amplitude of a spacious temple, is the temple therefore to be shut; or, rather, are not its doors to stand for ever open, a symbol of the ever-approachable God? So open I the door of the Apocalyptic visions, and insure every believer that therein he shall find ample light, revelation, information, and enlargement to his soul, in all the things which concern the glory of God and of the living Christ. We appeal to our future discourses for the proof whether this book is opened or sealed, is manifestation or concealment of the great mystery of God in Christ; whether it be an eye-glass through which to look upon the Scriptures, or itself a dark chamber which needeth

illumination. Who will illuminate the illumination of God? Who will reveal the revelation of God? He who undertaketh such a task doth darken counsel by words without wisdom. We go to the perusal of it as a book which hath already opened to us many mysteries, which hath been to our soul light and not darkness, which hath unfolded itself to our faith in God's most holy declarations, and we ask our readers not to look upon us as the openers of a mystery, but as the setters forth of a revelation; not as prognosticators of future uncertainties, but as the preachers of the great certainty—the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

While thus I solemnly and soberly, though most earnestly, and as some may think unguardedly, do present this book as full of light and of knowledge, and bearing to the future the same relation which the sun in the heaven doth to darkness; and do exhort every one with such deep conviction of its blessed light to peruse it, in the perfect assurance of being enlightened in the knowledge of the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; I guard every one from thinking that he comprehendeth all the light which is therein, though I urge him onward to the apprehension of still more and more. It is the chart of the Church, whose bark has been beating these two thousand years upon the stormy waves. As she is driven hither and thither, if she look into this divinely-constructed chart, she will discern that all her passages of peril have been foreseen and provided against. It will save us; and if another generation is to follow, it will save them; and so on till Christ come. But what a thing it is to lock the chart up in concealments tenfold, and let the ship drive upon shoals and quicksands! This is what your doctors and divines do, who seek the honour to themselves of steering the Church by rudder and compass of their own learning and prudence. Away with such opposers of the glory of my God and of His Church, and of this blessed open and unsealed book! Come one, come all who have faith in God's word; read this unsealed book with me, and see whether it require man's authority, man's wisdom, man's scholastic learning, to find in it that knowledge of the future coming of Christ, which their worldly apparatus of wisdom and prudence hath only served to hide from them. "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

I do most steadfastly believe, therefore, that all the ignorance which at this day resteth upon the Church concerning the great hope of Christ's coming, and the signs of the times in which we live; and the apostasy of Rome, and the infidel Antichrist, and the

speedy destruction of both, and the first resurrection, and the kingdom of the saints upon the earth, and everything else most concerning to this weary and sorrowful earth, ariseth from the indifference, and apathy, and self-sufficient ignorance in which they stand to this book, which is the chart of the Church's perilous voyage, and the light of a Christian's prospects into the future. And therefore I do place the hope, yea, and the certainty of knowledge, as another great encouragement for the believer to attend me in my prelections upon this book; which is not darkness, but light; which is not doubt, but certainty; which is not speculation, but most true knowledge to every one who believeth. How man desireth to be taught insight into the future! It is by far his noblest desire. It is not to be rebuked, but to be encouraged, and to be guided. This office belongs to God, and to Him alone, (Isa. xliii.;) prophecy is His method of enlightening it. And should the light itself be darkness, how great is that darkness? But, believe God rather than man, if you are not already sunk in unbelief. Believe that the prophecy is a light in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise on your hearts. Go then, with this book in your hand, and know as much of the future prospects of the Church as God hath seen it good to give unto us. How much light of knowledge of things to come there is here, I say not; but this I say, that all which there is, is here, and nowhere else. Therefore come here to seek and find it. Study this book for that most precious knowledge, the knowledge of the future; which it is vain to say you care not about: for about it man must care; and either by man must he be nursed into all error, or by God guided into all truth, through the only appointed means of His prophetic Word.

3. And now I come to speak of the third and last sanction with which God has sought to protect this book from neglect and contempt, and preserve it in the reverence of His Church; which is the sanction of fear addressed to such spirits as are not to be moved by sanctions of blessedness and of knowledge. It is written in these fearful words, with which the mighty God doth as with a thunderbolt close and clasp the awful volume: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book," (xxii. 18, 19.) Now being a man of flesh and blood, and no devil incarnate, I stand in awe of these fearful words. I have looked on fearful sights without trembling,

and heard the threatenings and denunciations of many an enemy without dismay; but I tremble and exceedingly quake before these words of the living God. And I would rather face the legions of hell in full array, than meet the *Word* coming against me with the terrors of this accusation: "Oh, man! thou didst add to the words of the prophecy of this book, therefore unto thee be added all the plagues that are written in this book;" or of this other accusation: "Oh, man! thou didst take away from the words of the book of this prophecy; and from thee shall be taken away thy part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." I say I am not an incarnate devil, but a man in flesh and blood; I am not a hardened and annealed infidel, but a humble and faithful believer of God's word, to every jot and tittle; and being so, I read this with deep emotion, and can say from my heart, O God! I tremble at this thy word. Let us now lay open this sanction.

And, first, oh ye dreamers! who think that ye are safe in neglecting the Revelation about which so much stir is beginning to be made, who hug yourselves up in your great wisdom not to search into mysteries, and flatter yourselves that it is safest to be indifferent, know of a verity, that if God stand to His word, ye are standing in a most perilous condition. For, through your neglect, you do not take away a part, but you take away the whole of what is written in it. So far as your faith goes, it is no part of it; so far as your influence goes, you withdraw it from the faith of others. What can you expect, oh ye despisers! oh ye self-satisfied worshippers of your own ease and prudence! your ease is disease, your prudence is imprudence, you are treasuring up unto yourselves the wrath and indignation of your God. Find me such an awful sanction as this appended to any other book of Scripture if you can. That which our Lord addeth to the Law and the Prophets (Matt. v.) is strong, but this is fearful. It is much to be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but, ah, how much more is it, to have all the plagues and judgments of antichrist and of the devil himself added to us! And yet such a spell hath bound both men and ministers fast, that they cannot, they will not, be roused to the scrupulous and exact consideration of this book, but will treat the most of it as an inscrutable mystery, which is more honoured in the neglect than in the meditation of it. Oh! I could stay and weep when I think upon the cold heedlessness with which my brethren in the Church have treated my endeavours to awaken them to the sense of this book's awful importance. Even at best they consider me as a harmless enthusiast, a heady speculator; but many of them do regard me as a misleader of the people. It is

vain that I cry out on every occasion. Not me, but my subject, oh, my brethren! Not me, but my Lord; not me, but your own salvation. Time after time I lift up my voice to move them to give heed to this book; but heed to it they will give none. Haply they take a text from it for the splendour of its diction, to form the basis of some spiritual interpretation or misinterpretation; haply to repel and gainsay all interpretation; haply to put another fold around the mass of prejudice and neglect with which these people already cover it. I see the dead sleep in which the Church is sunk; and I must do my office as a watchman, though I should speak like Isaiah to the heavens and the unconscious earth; for I do soon expect my Lord to arrive, and demand of me an account of my stewardship. Oh, my Lord, I willingly serve Thee, and I patiently wait for Thee: help me to be faithful. Oh! help me to be faithful among so many faithless.

The two verses in which this sanction of fear is written are spoken by the Lord Jesus himself, who is the speaker both in verse 16 preceding, and in verse 20 following them. He who had received it from the Father would well honour and guard His Father's gift: He who knows the sacredness of the Father's word, and loveth not that the Church should incur His Father's displeasure, would fain by timeous warning prevent the evil, and therefore doth in His own person utter the fearful sentence upon those who dishonour this book; and with those lips which shall hereafter, when He enacteth the Judge, carry the sentence into execution. Now it is a threatening, then it shall be a judgment. He uttereth the threatening to every one who heareth the prophecy of this book; not ministers only, but people also; every one to whose ears it may in any way be brought. And the first part of the sentence lies against every one who shall presume to add anything to this complete code of Christian prophecy; which is a book in itself complete, a full orb of truth, that may not be increased nor impaired. Our gracious God perceiving how Satan would in all ages tempt men to take unto themselves authority as prophets, and even to personate Christ Himself—as almost every impostor, and arch-heretic, and mystagogue hath done—doth by this word warn all against the awful consequences of such presumption, and doth defend the Church against receiving any of their prognostications or pretensions. The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is all that hath been, is all that ever will be, given to the Church upon the subject of His coming again, and I may say upon the subject of future things. And, therefore, let no one hang dreaming on, as if His coming again would be ushered in by some fresh heraldry, and the world duly warned thereof. In these twenty-two chapters the whole manifestation is

contained. Therefore let us make the best of it; and if any one come to us in his own name, pretending to other revelations than those herein contained, let us denounce against him the terrors of this curse. Now, I ask if this book itself were impenetrable and impervious to the sight of sanctified men, then what a case were we in! Deprived of all further light, and having none given to us, we must stumble onwards darkly, and that day overtake us as a thief in the night: whereas of the Church, it is said that day shall not come upon them as a thief, because they are children of the light and of the day. Now, lest, haply, any one should be deterred from coming to peruse and to understand this book by the fear of adding something to it of his own; while I would have a careful watch upon my lips and heart not to do so, I have no fear that the ground on which I tread is dangerous. It is holy, but it is not dangerous. I have great faith and entire confidence in the Holy Spirit, that when I am seeking to know the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, He will not lead me into error. I am jealous over my own proud imaginations and empty thoughts; but I know that the Holy Ghost is not to be resisted or overcome by them. My wandering propensities are not so strong but that God can bring me back to the Bishop and Shepherd of my soul. The teaching of the Spirit is not honoured by doubting Him. If we abstain from reading the Apocalypse, because of the false interpretations which have been made of it, we should likewise abstain from reading the rest of Scripture, because of the heretical opinions which have been grafted thereon. It is a remark of Sir Isaac Newton, that no one has devoted himself earnestly to prophecy without having been honoured to bring something to light. And it might be added that the one thing which every one is made instrumental in bringing to light, is that which the Church in his generation most needeth, and for which God stirred up His servant to inquire. And if, as we see, there be now awakened in the Church a lively interest in the study of prophecy, we may rest assured that it will lead to discoveries most profitable to her present condition. Yet can I not enter upon this work of interpreting this oft-interpreted book, without a solemn act of prayer to God, that He would prevent me from adding out of my own ingenuity anything to that which is contained therein. I do most solemnly disclaim all inventions of my own; I pray that nothing whatever may be taken on my authority; for me to desire to have authority over the conscience of any one, for you to give me such authority, is so far forth to incur the guilt here denounced. By the solemnity, by the fearfulness, by the terrors of this sanction, I do entreat every one who heareth these discourses, and any one who

now shall read them, to look upon me in no other light than as a reverent inquirer into the meaning of God's word, and a patient, painful preacher of the same.

The second part of this sanction is the proper safeguard against the fearfulness to inquire, and backwardness to know, which might be produced in timorous and doubting minds by the first. For now Christ denounceth against those who take away from the words of the book of this prophecy; and as if this were the more perilous side, it is protected by a threefold denunciation: "God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." I cannot help observing what an entireness this bespeaketh in the very words of Scripture, and how it confirmeth the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Also how it should guard us against wresting the words of Scripture to make them suit an hypothesis. I have no hypotheses to support. I want to discover Christ, not the measures and proportions of any scheme. I desire to teach the Church whatever pertaineth to the person and dignity of Christ; His actions as King within the veil, and His coming forth from it in the glory of His Father. So far only shall I look into the scheme and structure of the book as is necessary to reveal that unity in it which belongs to the unity of its subject, which is the manifestation of Jesus Christ. Now, who are guilty under this second sanction? They are most guilty who doubt or deny, or go about to cast suspicion upon the Divine authority of the book altogether: and these are far more numerous than the Church dreameth of. If they durst speak out, they would be found a great multitude. What but rooted infidelity can make the great body of ministers and people, especially ministers, smile within themselves, perhaps openly rail, when they hear of any one setting himself in right earnest to the work of expounding it?—I set it down, secondly, as bringing a man under this charge, when he careth nothing for it whatever, gives his soul no concern about the book or its expounders, and assumes to himself many airs of a wise and spiritual man, because he rather takes his texts and his readings from the Gospels and the Epistles. What, ye scorners! is it not Scripture? How dare ye, in the name of the living God, thus pitch one part of His word against another in vain and wicked emulations? I cannot excuse or indulge this spirit in any man, much less in a minister of God. I am no accuser-general of the Church; but I am a maintainer of God's most holy cause, against all the Church if need be: and I do before God's tribunal impeach such ministers of the Gospel, and members of Christ's Church, as do undervalue this book, as guilty of taking from it its essential value, not abstracting a few

words, but abstracting the pith out of every word. And I appeal to honest men, whether it be not to destroy this book for all good, and to defeat God's end as far as they can, thus to go about to withdraw men's hearts from it, and rail against those who would draw them to it. God is very merciful, or else He would not endure so much.—Further, they are guilty of taking words from it, who, in order to make it answer an hypothesis, will explain away the plain meaning and power of its simplest expressions: as, for example, when the saints in glory sing, "And we shall reign with thee on the earth;" and when it is said, that there is a first resurrection, and that the souls of the martyrs live and reign with Christ on the earth; and when it is said, that God dwelleth with men, and that Christ cometh at a certain time and place, and in a certain order of events; and all this is studiously denied and explained away. The very words of this prophecy are defended with awful sanctions, and let them be most sacred. Rather a thousand times let me err in keeping close to the words, than once in departing away from them. These are very grave and solemn considerations; but I feel that it is good to have brought them all before our minds in full array. Oh, how this book stands up the rebuke of the Church and of the land! No wonder Christ's advent is forgotten: the way in which this book has been treated is sufficient to account for it. If any one ask by what connexion the crime of adding to or of taking from the words of the book of this prophecy is connected with the penalties of all the Apocalyptic plagues, of losing place in the book of life, and the holy city, and other Apocalyptic promises, I refer to what I have already said upon this subject under the sanction of *blessing;* and, without repeating, do simply add, that the connexion between this book and the things pertaining to the coming of Christ, is exactly the connexion between word and deed, between faith and works. If we believe not the word, the work we shall not have; if we value not the word, we shall not have the work to value: the despising of the word is the despising of Him that gave it; and this He will not bless, but, contrariwise, will curse. This Apocalypse is to the Christian Church what the Law of Moses was to the Jewish state; and these two verses are like the curses pronounced upon Mount Nebo, or rather those declared in the Song of Moses. In the neglect of it our enemies have got the mastery over us, and we are in bondage. Whenever it hath been observed again, like the book of the Law under king Josiah, then we are favoured once more; and when it drops into oblivion, darkness cometh up and covereth the Church. This, in one word, is my view of the Apocalypse; that it was intended to be at once the chart, and the pole-star, and the light of

the Christian Church, over the stormy waves of time, until the Great Pilot, who walketh upon the waters and stilleth the waves, should again give Himself to the sinking ship, and make her His abode, His ark, His glory for ever and ever.

CONCLUSION.

I do not say that it is a thing in the power of any one man to accomplish, even though strengthened to the uttermost by the Holy Ghost; but I do believe that the Holy Ghost will strengthen some men in this generation, whom for that end He may choose, and by them will open unto the Church this book, after another manner than hath ever yet been done. Hitherto it hath been studied with a view chiefly to the Church, or to the world; and in this respect it hath been singularly blessed to the Church, by opening her eyes to the discernment of that apostasy which so long ruled like God over the earth. From the earliest times, Rome was discerned to be the Babylon of this book, and even in the darkness of the middle ages, there were men who knew and preached the Pope of Rome to be the beast. It is recorded of our First Richard, that, when detained in Sicily, he and another of the kings engaged in the same crusade, heard a famous friar preach that the Pope was the beast of the Apocalypse; but it was reserved for the time of the Reformation, and especially in Scotland, to demonstrate the abomination of Rome out of this book. I believe that in the Church of Scotland there have been written upon it more commentaries than in all the Protestant Churches besides; and I may say it is the only Church in which the Apocalypse is as much, if not more, used by the common people, and by the ministry, than any other book of Scripture. And this view of the book, as it bears upon the Church visible, is beginning to arm the servants of the Lord against the infidelity which by an hundred channels is hastening to overspread the Church; and, what is better, it is beginning to open once more to us the object, the glorious object of our hope,—which is, the advent and kingdom of our Lord. But all these services which this book hath rendered, and is rendering to the Church, are little compared with what it will do when opened with the higher aim which we have now before us, of discovering therein the offices, and the glories, and the future purposes and performances of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Church shall set themselves,—when the Church shall by God be stirred up,—to work in this mine, as at the Reformation they wrought in Paul's Epistles; there will arise upon her vision such a coming glory, her Lord will present Himself to her love and confidence in such transcendent beauty and majesty, that the primitive

times themselves will not surpass, if they equal, the devotedness of those who are nourished with that precious food which this book contains. The Reformation made good the perfectness of Christ's sacrifice. In Scotland it went a little further, and made good Christ's headship of the Church; and this was enough for the labours of one generation, who expected from their successors a continuance and enlargement of the work. But, alas! their successors converted the work which had been done into an idol, and worshipped it. The landmarks of doctrine which the Reformers drew, to mark off the clear ground which they had won from the abyss of Papal error, they expected that their posterity would have extended more and more into the waste, until they had reclaimed the whole sum and substance of Christian truth. But, alas! how otherwise hath it been! Not only hath no further encroachments been made upon the realms of the old anarch, but even that truth which we had attained to, hath been almost reft away from us by Arminian errors, or by a system of fatalism and necessity, a doctrine of right and property, of selfishness and personal safety, falsely called Calvinistic, but of which Calvin is one of the ablest confuters. We have lost the idea of the Church, we have lost the idea of the sacraments, we have lost the idea of a redemption of love, as a basis of an election of grace; a common redemption, as the basis of a particular election; and, in a word, we are fallen as far beneath the Reformers, as they were beneath the primitive Church in everything except the doctrine of justification by faith. There, I may say, the Reformers were on a level with the primitive Church. But this precious jewel of the Reformation hath almost perished in our hands; so that, in my judgment, the Evangelical method of preaching justification by faith is a more subtle form of error than the High-church method of preaching justification by works of morality; or the Papal method of preaching justification by merits of saints, and pilgrimages, and severities, and other self-inflicted acts of the will.—But into these things I enter not, nor would have named them, save to express my conviction that something must be done, or else the Church, and the faith also, of which it is the pillar, will go to wreck. And I believe *that* something is, the exposition of Christ's person and offices and coming, which are all-inclusive and all-comprehensive. He is the Applier of His own sacrifice; He is the Head of the Church; He is the Prince of the kings of the earth; He is the Contender against the apostasy, He is the Destroyer of it; He is the bringer-in of the Millennium, and He is the Upholder of it. Here is a theme, large as human knowledge; not the doctrine of His sacrifice merely by which the Reformers did so much, but the doctrine of

His complete living person, and of His complete and perfect work. And where is this set out? In that book whose name is, Discovery of Jesus Christ; a book which, being looked upon in respect to His person and dignity, I will say, he that runneth may read; once possess yourself with the idea contained in its name, that it is Jesus Christ revealed or discovered, and read it for the purpose of knowing the truth made known concerning Him, and you shall, in one reading of it, have more distinct apprehensions of His personal glories than from reading any, or I will say all, the Scriptures besides. It is the shutting of this book which hath made Christ's glory to be so little known and so little discoursed of. Indeed, and in truth, I may say, that Christ's glory in His manhood is hardly believed at all. The Church, when she contemplates Christ glorious, is wont to have her mind directed to the period which preceded, and not to the period which followeth, the Incarnation. Now that glory which He had with His Father before the world was, is a glory of the infinite and incomprehensible Godhead, which cometh not within the scope of man's understanding, and indeed which, save for worship, entereth not within the region of man's concerns. But the glory to which He attained in His manhood, in which He now subsisteth in redeemed flesh of man, and which He now putteth forth, by and in humanity's form, holding with an arm of flesh and guiding with faculties of reason, the sceptre of God,—this is a thing wholly cognoscible by man, and to that end brought to pass that the creature might know it, and in knowing it be blessed. And seeing that God hath given us a book, designed for nothing less than the unfolding to human knowledge of that glory to which His Son is advanced, and of that glory in which He is yet to be revealed, how diligent ought we to be, who have fellow-feeling and co-heirship in it all, to discover the might, the fulness, the beauty, of that Person in whom we have believed, and who hath promised to enrich us with the same endowments, and to fill us with the same fulness! And how diligent should pastors and ministers of the Church whom He gave and continueth unto His Church for the very end of conveying to her the gifts which He received when He ascended up on high; how diligent, I say, ought we to be in meditating this book, which professeth to reveal Jesus Christ, which Jesus Christ received as a gift from His Father, and which He sent straightway unto His servant John, that through him it might be shown unto all believers! Be it understood, therefore, by you all, that I have so much faith in God's faithful word, that I will never suffer this book, in my presence, to be treated lightly; that I will never shrink as a divine to draw from it my chief illustrations of the glories of Christ, of His rights

and prerogatives in the day of His absence, and of His performances and possessions when He shall come again. I will resist unto blood those who say that another than He is head of the Church; those who say that a magistrate or king may govern well, with an eye only to the people's well-being, and with no respect to Christ the Priestly King; and those who say that there is to be a millennial kingdom without His presence, and a destruction of Antichrist without His power. I am resolved by the grace of God to make a stand for the revival of this book from among the rust of obsolete interpretation and the dust of neglect. I feel that I can do little in such a work as the evolution of the glories of Christ, written in the history of the Church, and of the world. But we must be faithful in the least, as well as in the greatest. The Lord will raise up better and wiser servants in our room, whereat we shall much rejoice. We must be up and doing, for the time is at hand: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." May the Lord set forth in an earthen vessel the preciousness of this His treasure; may the Lord prosper the undertaking of His servant; may the Lord bless it to his native land, and to his mother-church! God hear this prayer, and answer it for His glorious Name's sake.

THE THANKSGIVING.

I THANK Thee, LORD, that Thou hast taught my soul,
Low lying at Thy feet, to rise again
In majesty of truth. Her nakedness
Thou hast adorn'd with robes of heavenly light;
Her blear-eyed, sickly vision purged with salve,
Which cost the price of Thy most precious blood!
And, now, behold, far looking through the dark
And depth of future times, I can descry
The ends and purposes of God; and tell
Unto Thy Church glad tidings of Thyself.
Oh, what a wretch were I, thus high advanced
From grovelling in the dust, did I refrain
My lips from serving Thee, my King, my God!
I thank Thee, Lord: my Lord, I give Thee thanks.

LECTURE II.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION, IN WHICH JESUS CHRIST IS REVEALED BY NAMES.

REV. i. 4-8.

"*John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*"

THE single object of this book is, as we have shown in our former discourse, to reveal or disclose the person and the office of Jesus Christ, as God hath constituted Him since His ascension into glory, and as God would have Him to be believed on in the churches. This no one can deny is the highest object which a communication from heaven can have. If God's glory be the one great object of a creature's being; and if that glory is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, and there only to be seen, then this book, which proposeth to take the veil from off the countenance of Jesus, and show it to the intelligence of the creature, is the book of all others most concerning to the glory of God, and to the chiefest end of man.

In our former lecture, when treating of the subject-matter of the book (pp. 47–49), we laid it down in general that the object of the first vision, which is contained in the first three chapters, is to reveal Christ as the Universal Bishop, or the only Head and High Priest of His Church. This, therefore, we set down as the general title of our discourses upon the first three chapters; which, containing one, and only one subject, ought to be expounded in subordination to

that subject which they contain. But upon inspecting the subject-matter more closely, we find that it consisteth of three parts: the first, which is the prelude to the whole book, being contained between the fourth and the tenth verses; the second, which is the first vision, being contained in the remaining verses of the first chapter; and the third, which is the seven epistles, being contained in the second and third chapters. Here, then, is a general division of the subject-matter. First, the prelude or overture to the whole book; secondly, the vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; and, thirdly, the epistles to the churches. Of these, the last falleth likewise into three parts: first, the superscription of the epistles, or, in other words, the titles which Christ assumeth to each of the churches; secondly, the epistles themselves; and, thirdly, the sayings of the Spirit unto the churches. This seems to me a complete subdivision and arrangement of the matter of the first three chapters; to the due and orderly consideration of which we do now address ourselves.

And first, of the prelude, or overture to the whole book. It begins with the inscription of the book to the seven churches which are in Asia,—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These were seven principal cities of Asia Minor, which remain unto this day, and nearly in that state threatened or foretold in the seven epistles to the churches which were planted therein. To these seven churches the apostle inditeth the book which he had received from the angel of Christ, and which Christ had received from God, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. God, in giving it, indites it to all His servants, and the style of it throughout is, to every one that hath an ear to hear, to all the churches (Rev. ii. 23); and according to its destination of God, it hath come to all the churches. Wherefore, then, it may be asked, doth John address it to these seven only? The answer to this question is found in verse 11, where Christ expressly commandeth him so to do. This command John faithfully obeys, by addressing the account of what he saw to these seven churches, with such an introduction as seemed to him best. Wherefore the Lord commanded him to address it unto them peculiarly, is a question which it may be as well to answer at once in this place.

The number seven is employed in this book several times, and always, as we judge, with the same signification, denoting unity out of diverse things, completeness out of diverse parts, totality out of diverse particulars: and this property of expressing completeness, totality, and unity, the number seven deriveth, as I conceive, from

the only work of God which is finished; to wit, the work of creation, which was accomplished in seven successive acts, and yet is one complete work. From this God appointed the enumeration of time by weeks of seven days each, being the most common and simple circle, or cycle of time. From this constant custom of counting seven days, and then beginning to count again, the number seven hath acquired that property of denoting a whole, which a number can only obtain by such a means; while by consisting of several individuals it denotes a complete whole, consisting of many parts; the root of this signification being, as I have said, that the only complete and all-inclusive work, the work of creation, was ordered in this wise. But whatever may be the account rendered of this matter, there can be no doubt with respect to the fact that the number seven is so used in this book; a few instances of which we shall adduce. In this very verse the Holy Ghost is denoted by the seven Spirits, to signify unity of subsistence in a variety of persons. In the 6th verse of the 5th chapter the Lamb is represented with seven horns and seven eyes; whereas the four living creatures which worship the Lamb are full of eyes, within and without; and the Lamb who is worshipped hath only seven,—a clear and decisive proof that the number seven expresses more than fulness of eyes, even all vision, complete and perfect knowledge. So likewise do the seven horns express complete and perfect power. In like manner, the seven-sealed book expresseth the complete unrevealed mystery of God; and the seven trumpets the complete action of His judgment. And, in short, throughout this prophecy, whatever is characterised by the number seven, doth express totality, or the inclusion of all the parts. This being admitted in general, as indeed it is on all hands admitted, when applied to the churches, it must likewise signify the whole of them; all the particular churches in all ages, whose completeness doth constitute the unity of the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Not, therefore, to those seven individual churches alone, nor yet to all the churches in that age, but to all the churches in all ages, until the number of the elect shall be accomplished, is this book of the Apocalypse indited. The seven churches in Asia, whose names are written, were indeed the first custodiers of the precious treasure; as were the churches of Rome, and Corinth, and Ephesus, and Thessalonica, of their several epistles. But as a matter of more deep concernment, this book is given in charge to seven churches; and that in such a way as to import that they, in that charge, did but represent all the churches of God, which were to be, till Christ should come again. Upon which most striking distinction, I observe, first, the superlative dignity thereby

conferred upon the treatise, that it should be addressed to all the churches, as that without which they would find themselves incomplete. And blessed be the care of God to give this book dignity and importance: cursed be the arts of man, or of the devil, to lessen or undervalue it.—I observe, secondly, how idle are those, and contradictory of the truth, who say that it is a book whose importance hath not yet come to be felt by the Church; nor will, until the very time of the coming of the Lord. For if so, it would not thus solemnly and universally have been addressed. Paul would not have addressed an epistle to the Ephesians which concerned not the Ephesians, nor any one else for many generations. No more would God have given a book to Christ, and Christ to the angel, and the angel to John, and John to the seven churches, unless it were instantly to come into profitable use.—And I observe, thirdly, upon this inscription of the book, how preposterous are those who would hoard it up for the Jews; as if they had not enough of Scripture already, and more than they have made good use of. If the Jews, as Jews either converted or unconverted, had possessed such an interest in it, why indite it to seven Christian churches? I wish men would not part with common sense when they interpret God's Word. But more of these things hereafter.

2. We now come to the benediction, which is expressed as in the other books of Scripture, "Grace be unto you and peace." This is no part of the Revelation, but of John's indorsement of it; as indeed are all the six following verses. Now, because these words, grace and peace, do ever occur at the outset of the apostolical communications, and form the subject of their benediction, we may well believe that they are words most pregnant with meaning, and therefore worthy always of the most grave consideration. Grace is that attribute or quality in God's being, which Christ fully and truly revealed: as it is written, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It expresseth the aspect of His countenance, and the dispositions of His mind towards the sinful children of men: being the aspect of benignity, and the disposition of love. Not only forgiveness of sin, but endowment with undeserved unpurchased favour. Grace is directly opposed to works, in that passage where it is written, "If it is of grace, then it is no more work, otherwise grace is no more grace." When, therefore, the apostle saith "Grace be unto you," he doth wish, and, so far as they had faith, communicate unto them that light of love with which God shineth upon men in Jesus Christ; and when he likewise wisheth unto them peace, he doth repeat that which Christ came from heaven to preach, as it is written, "preaching peace." Now, as grace implieth a condition of humiliation whereto to be gracious,

so doth peace imply a condition of warfare whereto peace may be proclaimed. The humiliation to which God is gracious in the gospel, is man's miserable and lost estate by nature through sin; the state of warfare to which He preacheth peace, is the rebellion and alienation of His will from the will and mind of God. Conditions these anterior to a gospel. Grace and peace have no meaning, no blessing, yea no object, unless we grant the world to be in a state of condemnation and alienation without a gospel. The uncondemned man asketh not for grace; the righteous man asketh only for justice. Friends ask not for peace, because they have it already. The continual use of these words, grace and peace, in the mouth of Christ and His Church, do bespeak the world to be by God's appointment in a state of condemnation and alienation from Himself; and by that same appointment brought back and restored unto a state of reconciliation and pacification. When I say by God's appointment, I do not mean an arbitrary act of will, but a necessary law of being, an unchangeable attribute of His essence; whereof it is as true that He is just, as that He is the justifier of him that believeth; as true that He is holy, as that He is gracious; as true that He can punish, as that He can forgive. And when the apostles do in their benedictions to the churches say, "Grace and peace be unto you," they not only declare the forgiveness and favour of God to sinful men, but likewise communicate these gifts unto those who have faith in their office. And herein lieth the chief dignity of the ministerial office, that we do bless the people in the full assurance that, wherever faith is, our blessing will there rest; and only where faith is not, will it return to us again: for neither are the ordinances, nor the persons appointed to minister them, empty things, but full of the spiritual substances signified therein. It was no vain wish of John when he said, "Grace and peace be unto you;" nor is it an empty wish at this far distance of time and place from its utterance; but upon him who readeth and upon him who heareth with faith, these words of benediction shall in the very substance of the thing arise within his heart. The more may God endow us with faith in every jot and tittle of His holy word! But this certainty of blessing to him that believeth will the more appear, when we consider next the unchangeableness of the persons in whom it is contained inexhaustible, and from whom it floweth everlastingly.

3. "From Him which was, and which is, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." The style of the persons of the blessed Godhead is grand and sublime, like everything else in this book.

That of the Father, whose prerogative it is to be self-originated, whose name is Jehovah, I Am that I Am, expressive of unchangeableness and identity in all times and places, is, as here given, expressive of the same truth of His underived and unchangeable being: "from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This some have thought to be a translation into the Greek of the Hebrew word Jehovah; and in the 8th verse, where the same style is used of Christ, they suppose the word Almighty, which is added, to be equivalent to the Hebrew word Elohim or God, so as to make up for Christ that most frequent name of God in the Old Testament, Jehovah Elohim, or the Lord God. However this may be, there can be no doubt that this is the style appropriated to the Father in the passage before us, "which is, and which was, and which is to come." And the question ariseth, What is its precise import, and what is the propriety of its use in this place? With respect to its import, we observe that it denotes freedom from all change, independence upon all time and place; a being with whom past, present, and to come are one and the same. Now, every creature whatsoever hath a beginning, and therefore is under the conditions of time; and every form of being hath fallen, and is therefore under the condition of change. Wherefore it seems to me that this style doth best express the condition of Him who is not a creature, but the Creator, God over all, blessed for ever. When this same style of Godhead is applied unto Christ in the 8th verse, there is added to it "the Almighty," or the Governor of all; by which addition the absolute style of the Father is linked, and, as it were, limited to the created universe; declaring to us, that in Christ there is the same Godhead as in the Father, yet not in the same absolute state, but in the state of being applied to the government of all things. The addition of the word Almighty, or All-Governor, in the 8th verse, doth not add unto, but detract from, the awful abysmal depth of the absolute Being expressed by the words "which was, and which is, and which is to come;" and doth in fact represent the Godhead acting with powers defined and limited unto the end of governing the world. The one being the Godhead unknown, and unknowable, in the person of the Father subsisting, and worshipped of every creature, the other being that same Godhead manifested within the limits of reason in the person of the Word made flesh, who can be known, and ought to be known; and for no other end than to be known, did so bound and limit Himself. This is a point which requireth some little explanation; and as it concerneth man above all things to know God, and not to be ignorant of Him, I count no labour so well bestowed as that which I give to unfold and glorify

the name of my Father which is in heaven. The Godhead being purposed to manifest itself in the person of the Son, by exhibiting Him under conditions of change, born, humbled, slain; and afterwards in the person of the Holy Ghost, by bringing the world under the Son incarnate, it became necessary for expressing the true character of Godhead and preventing all misunderstanding, that its essential, unrevealed, unlimited, unsearchable properties, should remain hidden in the person of the Father, and there abiding, be worshipped by the Son incarnate, and by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of regenerate men. Godhead, in its incomprehensibility, standeth therefore in the person of the Father; in its comprehensibility, in the person of the Son; and in its communicableness, in the person of the Holy Ghost. All that can be felt of God, is in the Holy Ghost; all that can be known of God, is in the Son; and all that is of God, is in the Father. Yet there are not three Godheads, but one Godhead; and therefore that Godhead which is worshipped in the Father, is the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and so, also, is that Godhead which is known in the Son, and which is possessed in the Spirit. The Godhead changeth not, but existeth in three subsistencies; the one for worship of the creature, the other for knowledge of the creature, the other for inhabitation of the creature. And all in-working of the Spirit referreth unto Christ, as its origin and end; and all manifestation in Christ referreth to the Father, as its origin and end; so that absolute Godhead, essential and incomprehensible Godhead, is glorified in all our knowledge, and in all our experience. Christ glorifies God, and every member of Christ glorifies the Son and the Father; whom in the Son they ever behold, but cannot altogether behold. And wherein they cannot know Him, and wherein they cannot contain Him, they worship Him, believe in Him, and trust upon Him. So that all experience and all knowledge is unto worship: and worship begins where knowledge and experience end: and knowledge and experience are but the footing upon which worship stands, to minister unto God the acceptable offering of entire trust and complete dependence; and because this care and guardianship, so to speak, of Godhead's unrevealed and worshipped fulness belongeth to the Father, He hath, in the passage before us, the style of the absolute one.

We come now to the style in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of in this benediction: "And from the seven Spirits which are before his throne:" upon which we observe, in general, that it carrieth a distinct reference to the vision of the fourth chapter, where we have the throne of God represented to us, and before that throne the seven Spirits: as it is written, ver. 5, "And out of the throne pro-

ceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Now whereas it is said in our text, that the seven Spirits are before the throne of Him which was, and is, and which is to come; and in the text just quoted, that they are before the throne of Him which was to look upon like a sardine and a jasper stone, we certainly conclude, that it is the person of the eternal Father which is there represented unto us, but with the limitation of the All-Governor; not in the absoluteness of the Father, which cannot be represented by any vision, nor seen by any eye, nor comprehended by any mind, but within the limits assumed by the Son, for the end of showing forth the Father's glory. And in that same vision of the fourth and fifth chapters, we have likewise the person of the Son representing His own assumed character, by a Lamb which had been slain, and lived still; that is, as the first-begotten from the dead: who likewise there receiveth His other dignity of the Prince of the kings of the earth; for into His hand is given that seven-sealed book, which possesseth the mysterious power, as it is unrolled, of chastising, afflicting, and finally dethroning them all. So that we may in general assert, that in the vision of the fourth and fifth chapters, which in our former lecture we have observed is the master vision of all which follows, we have embodied by symbols that style of the Godhead which in the benediction is expressed by words: teaching us this lesson, that the apostle John, when he had received the further insight given in this book, into the being and operation of God, did straightway begin to make his use of it, in speaking to the churches; and preferreth to preface his book with that style rather than with the ordinary style of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He learned from his vision; and what he learned, he instantly used for the profit of the Church.

Having observed this in general, we now proceed in particular to open the mystery which is revealed in the words, "The seven Spirits which are before his throne." That this denominates the Holy Ghost, will, I think, hardly be doubted by any one who observeth the place where it occurs between the Father upon the one hand, and our Lord Jesus Christ upon the other. It is not to be believed that in a benediction proceeding from three persons, of whom two are assuredly the person of the Father, and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the third should not be the person of the Holy Ghost. But this is put beyond all doubt, from what is written of the Lamb, (ver. 6,) that it had seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. Now, who but the Holy Spirit thus inhereth in the Lamb, as His power and His vision,

and from Him proceedeth over all the earth? Who is Christ's power but the Holy Ghost? And as we have already seen the absolute name of the Godhead applied to, and made to inhere in, the name of Christ, so have we, in the text just quoted, the name of the Holy Ghost likewise made in Him to adhere; showing us this great point of doctrine, that though the person of Christ is the person of the Son, yet in Christ, and in Him only, is the knowledge of the Father, and the knowledge of the Holy Ghost to be apprehended: as it is written, "in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily."—How this is, it is not difficult to perceive. The human will in Christ is actuated by the person of the Son; and that to which it ever conformeth itself, is the will of the Father: "Not my will, but thine be done." He that conformeth it, is the Son; He to whom it is conformed, is the Father; and the power operating to resist the devil, the world, and the flesh, is the Holy Ghost; and so, in Christ the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. If I want to know what the Father's will and word is, I must examine what Christ said and did. "He that seeth me, seeth the Father."—Again, if I would know what the Holy Ghost can effect with the materials of fallen nature, I must behold the perfect righteousness of Christ. "He shall take of the things of Christ, and shall show them unto you." With respect now to the expression, "seven Spirits," it is to be understood according to what hath been said above upon the seven churches, as denoting a totality in partition, a unity in divided not separated parts;—the Spirit in the state of diffusion through the complete body of Christ; and as the unity of the body is represented by seven churches, so the unity of the Spirit is represented by the seven Spirits. To clear this matter a little, it is necessary to bear in mind, that as the Son, in order to become the Christ, descendeth from His absoluteness of Godhead into the limitations of manhood, so the Holy Ghost, in order to become the Spirit of Christ, likewise condescendeth from His absoluteness of Godhead into the limitations to which it pleaseth the Father and the Son that the work of redemption should extend. To no one is it given to feed upon the Holy Ghost in His Divine subsistence, save to the Son, likewise in His Divine subsistence. Every one of Christ's members must receive the Holy Ghost as flesh and blood of Christ; that is to say, in the form of redeemed manhood. The Godhead of the Holy Ghost is no more mingled with the creature than is the Godhead of the Father and the Son. That which incorporates itself with the regenerated creature is the Holy Ghost, the life of the humanity of Christ, and from thence proceeding to gather thereinto all the members which the Father giveth unto Him, until His body shall have

been completed. This is the view of the Holy Ghost's operation in the Church; joining and subordinating the members unto Christ the Head. And if this only true view of the operation of the Holy Ghost were duly recognised, there would be, ever at the same time, a recognition of the Church, and of the union of its members, with Christ their Head. All this is lost sight of for want of reverence for the Book of Revelation, where the Holy Ghost is never otherwise expressed, than by the seven lamps of fire before the throne, the seven horns and seven eyes in the head of the Lamb. Now with respect to the other part of the title, "before His throne," connected as it is in the fourth chapter with the symbol of the seven lamps of fire, I think the key of the mystery is in the custom of Eastern kings, to have seven princes who were permitted to see the king's face always; as is to be seen both in the Book of Esther i. 14, and of Ezra vii. 14. I know not whether it was so in other dynasties; but certainly it was so in the Persian dynasty, concerning which the historical books of the Old Testament are chiefly concerned. I mean, that the position of the seven Spirits before the throne of God doth express that by the Holy Ghost, thus proceeding from Christ, the purposes of the King of kings are fulfilled. If it is the office of Christ to personate the enthroned one, then it is the office of the Holy Ghost to personate the seven princes who see His face, and carry forth His commands. By the Son, the will of the Father is perceived, and rendered intelligible to all creatures. By the Holy Ghost, the will of the Father, thus brought into creature bounds, is carried forth and effected in other creatures. In one word, the throne of God is known in Christ, and felt beyond the person of Christ in the Holy Ghost; not that the Holy Ghost of his own will doeth any thing, but of the will of the Father, and of the will of the Son; being properly the executive, and only the executive of the kingdom; the legislative lying in the harmony of the Father and the Son, meeting and kissing one another in the two natures of Christ.—Now there wanteth but two remarks to complete what we have to say upon this second of the persons from whom the benediction proceedeth. First, that while the benediction in the substance of it, grace and peace, agrees with other books of the New Testament, it hath the peculiarity of mentioning all the Three Persons of the blessed Godhead; whereas the apostolical Epistles do mention only the two first; of which peculiarity I take the reason to be this: that they, being given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, do testify only of the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost being himself the testifier; but this being communicated by an angel, and not inspired by the Spirit, doth

properly bear testimony of all the three, as it is also in the conclusion of some of the apostolic Epistles, when the apostle speaketh in his own name, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The second remark is, That the Holy Ghost occupieth the second place, and not the third, according to the usual and orthodox form; whereof I take the intention to be this: that Christ, in this book, as indeed in all Scripture, is represented as deriving His subsistence as the Christ, or the God-man, from the Holy Ghost, by Him conceived in the womb: by Him indued for his ministry; by Him presented spotless on the cross; by Him raised from the dead; by Him informed with these seven horns of power, and seven eyes of knowledge. And being so, that He upon the throne sitteth there in lineaments of Godhead, manifest in flesh, it well beseemeth and well representeth the mystery, that Christ in His human character and office should stand after the Holy Ghost, who furnisheth Him for the same.

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness." There now follows a brief and ample designation of the second person of the blessed Trinity, here mentioned last, for the reason given above, and perhaps also for the sake of the doxology, and successions of other things concerning Him which follow through the space of four verses. *Jesus* he hath, (Matt. i. 21,) "because He shall save his people from their sins." This is the name of His manhood and humility, which He shall exalt into the highest, loftiest place of heaven, until (Phil. ii. 10) "at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth." This is the name by which He was named at, or rather before His birth, and which He bore until He had accomplished human redemption; and by which, therefore, He is to be preached amongst men: "For there is none other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved." His name, Christ, or anointed one, He hath in virtue of that anointing which He received from the Holy Ghost at His conception, and in virtue of which He was a holy thing, though He had taken up an unholy substance; in virtue of which, also, He lived that life which is recorded in the Gospel, according to the word of Peter, (Acts x. 38;) "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." In virtue of which anointing, He also offered Himself upon the cross, a pure and spotless sacrifice for that sinful humanity whereof He had assumed a portion, according as it is written, Heb. ix. 14, "through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot unto God." In virtue of which anointing, also, He arose the Son of God, with

power from the dead; as it is written, Rom. i. 4, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;" and as if all this gift and possession of the Spirit, which in His conception, life, death, and resurrection, He enjoyed, had been nothing when compared with that fulness of power into which He entered at His ascension, Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, speaketh of Him as if He had but then received the promise of the Holy Ghost, (Acts ii. 33:) "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Insomuch, also, that He resteth the demonstration of His Christhood upon that very act of power which He put forth in the giving of the Holy Ghost, (Acts ii. 36:) "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." As the possession of any personal property is only made known to others by the coming forth, or communication of the same, so the knowledge that Christ possessed the Holy Spirit, or was the Christ, became a fact for us—that is, for the Church in general—only when He dispensed the same on the day of Pentecost, and enriched the Church with the endowment which He Himself had possessed within Himself, from the moment of His conception, and executed during all the period of His life. Therefore, we are properly to regard Him as Jesus until His ascension, during which time our salvation was accomplished; and from that time forth to consider Him also as Christ, during which He hath been making Himself known to us as the possessor and bestower of the Holy Spirit.

"The faithful Witness;" as it is written, John xviii. 37, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." He hath this name, as being the visible manifestation of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of His person, according as it is written, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" for without Christ, the Father neither is nor can be known: as it is written, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;" and not only of the Father is He the faithful witness and only manifestation, but also of the Son, as it is written, "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go." The same may be said also of the Holy Ghost, of whose fulness in a sinful substance, His humbled humanity was the manifestation, as his glorified humanity shall

through eternity be the manifestation of the fulness of the Holy Spirit in majesty and power; so that the Holy Spirit in His dealings with the Church, doth only take of the things of Christ and show them to our souls. Well is it said, therefore, that in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, because in Him and upon Him, were concentrated all the Divine attributes which can be communicated and manifested in a finite form. There can be nothing of Godhead known, seen, apprehended, or possessed, besides what is witnessed in Christ, and by Christ; for Christ is, as He Himself declareth, not a true word merely, but the Truth; not a guide merely, but the Way; not a living one merely, but the Life, and the Maker of it. Furthermore, He is the faithful Witness, as being the Word in the mouth of all the prophets, and the ultimate end of all their predictions: according as it is written in John i. 16, "Of his fulness have all we received;" and Rev. xix. 10, "The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus." So also was He the great witness of the holiness of the law, which before Him had been dishonoured and treated as if it were untrue, or unfit for man. It did indeed serve to prove every man a liar; but no man had arisen able to prove it true, until Christ fulfilled the law, and made it honourable; so that He verified the wisdom, and goodness, and holiness, which is in the law, showing that it was made for man, and fitted to bless man. In all those respects which concern the perfection and truth of manhood, as well as in all those respects which concern the truth of Godhead, in destroying all false philosophy, as well as all false religion, and preaching out a system of eternal truth, yea, also in a higher sense still, is He the faithful Witness: I mean, inasmuch as He it is who in the age to come shall cast the liar out of the earth, and the great lie out of the creation; and shall make the handiwork of God to be all a mirror, polished and pure, wherein, as in a glass, shall be beheld the truths of the Divine being, and power, and glory, even as it was beheld in Christ; and there shall be no guile found in the mouths of men; and there shall be no delusion nor deception found in the creatures which God hath made; but all shall work together as the harmonious system of truth which Christ the Head upholdeth and guideth, which the Spirit of truth from Him proceeding inspireth with a unity of design and a harmony of operation. Then, when all things feel themselves informed by, and sustained upon the holy humanity of Christ, and through the hypostatical union of this humanity with the Divine substance, connected and wedded in close fellowship with the Godhead, and inhabited by the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Godman; then, I say, shall it be made manifest that Jesus Christ is the

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faithful Witness, in whom every one who hath believed hath found everything to come to pass as had been promised,—in whom every one that believeth not hath likewise found the same. So that through the spheres of creation, from the highest order of the redeemed Church, who sit in the throne, and round about the throne, down to the lowest depth of hell; every creature in its estate, in the conditions of its being, shall tell out the truth of that testimony and witness which by Christ hath been declared of them all, from the day he went forth in the plenitude of His Father's power to bring the creatures existent out of nothing.

"The First-begotten from the dead," according to the testimony (Acts xxvi. 22) "of Moses and the Prophets, that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead." The same title hath He received from St Paul, Col. i. 18, "Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead;" and in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, (xv. 23,) Christ is called, "Christ the first fruits of the resurrection." There must, no doubt, be much meaning in this title, "First-begotten from the dead," which stands between these two, "the faithful Witness," and "the Prince of the kings of the earth." What the mystery of this name is we shall now endeavour to unfold. Death is the seal of the fallen creature: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" and Christ's death did really and truly prove Him to be in the state of fallen man, a very man, after the similitude of the fallen, and not of the unfallen Adam. As he took this nature at first from the fallen virgin, by an act of His self-existent being as the second person of the Godhead, so I believe that His Divine nature being ever present with His human nature, in the same person, doth ever show forth its unspeakable love, in condescending unto the human nature, so that the action of the Divine person should be the action of a very man. The Divine nature is infinite in all its attributes, but the human nature is finite. Of the infinite, man hath and can have no apprehension nor hold of any kind, and to bring the infinite substance of the Godhead within the scope of man's, of the creature's comprehension, was the very end of the mystery of the Incarnation. Now, inasmuch as the Son of God did "take part of flesh and blood with the children," and become a true form of man, it was necessary that He should be under the law, under which God's righteousness had placed the fallen man; a law of which the very object was to separate the clean from the unclean, by an artificial distinction, which by taking a part out of the whole, and calling it clean, did show the whole from which it was taken to be unclean; a law which made continual remembrance of sin from year to year;

a law whose moral precepts forbid the temptations to which a fallen man, and only a fallen man, is incidental; and define and command the perfect righteousness which God beholdeth as proper to that state of the creatures, and requireth him to possess. For every creature of God is good, when it hath been sanctified by the word of God and by prayer; and even this fallen creature were very good, yea, and very noble, if he were able to keep the commandments of God. It is sin that defileth a man, and maketh him hateful in the sight of God. Now, seeing Christ came under this law ceremonial, political, and moral, which law is proper only to a creature fallen, it proveth beyond all question, that it was the seed of Abraham which He laid hold upon, and not manhood, after the type of Adam's first estate. The law of Adam's first estate was not a law ceremonial, nor a law moral, pre-supposing wickedness to be present in the subject of it; but it was a law positive, or arbitrary, signifying only lordship in Him who imposed it. And if Christ had come in Adam's primeval estate, the law of His being would have been such as was the law of Adam's being, and not such as the law of the creatures fallen. Doubt, therefore, can there be none, even were it not written in express words, that He laid hold of the seed of Abraham; even were it not manifested in the very fact of His being conceived in the womb of a fallen woman; even were He not spoken of in all the Prophets, and the Psalms, as partaking a sinful substance, and continually grieving over the sinfulness of the same; yea, even were it not necessary that He might be the High Priest of fallen man, and the great evidence of what the Holy Spirit can do, in our fallen nature, and therefore our complete exemplar in everything; I say, besides all these grave considerations, each one of which is a great head of the Incarnation, it is put beyond a doubt, by the very law of His being, by His coming under that law which is proper only to a being fallen, that He took upon Himself our sinful substance; and herein lay the greatness of His love, that He despised not the virgin's womb, that He despised not consubstantial union with the substance of the virgin. This also was His crucifixion, to be bound unto such an unholy thing,—He who was the Holy One of God, the image, and the brightness of His purity. Most unnatural alliance, most violent of all contradictions, most incomprehensible condescension of God, most infinite humiliation of the Divine substance! And herein also lay the great work of the Holy Ghost, that in His conception, and from His conception, and during His life, and in His death, He should so possess, and so empower this Creator-creature, this God-man, this person of natures human and Divine, as that He should be holy, born a holy thing,

and keep the law, and make it honourable, and present Himself on the cross, "an offering without spot or blemish." And herein also the Christ received the proof of His Father's satisfaction with the work which He was accomplishing by the possession of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father. And herein, as I judge, consisted the agony in the garden, and the horror on the cross; that for the end of showing forth the torture, and the anguish, and the weakness, and the thick darkness which came upon the person of Christ, from its union with the fallen humanity, for this and for other ends of God's purpose the Spirit was withdrawn, when the Spirit had completed the great type of the life of every believer. And by the difference which thereupon ensued in the condition of Christ, it was shown what an important part the Spirit bore in the Incarnation, which could not have been shown but by exhibiting the man-God with the Spirit in a suspended state.

Into this matter I have thought it the more needful to enter somewhat at large; because I do find a great reluctancy in the Church to receive, and a great inability to improve, this great head of doctrine; that "the body of Christ was, in its proper nature, mortal and corruptible" (see Scotch Confession, Article on the Sacraments;) without which doctrine I feel myself unable to proceed a step in this exposition, to show forth the depth of this name given to Christ, "the First-begotten from the dead." But now, having unfolded the nature of His human being, I feel my way clear before me. In every action of His life the Son of God became man; and, by the Holy Spirit given unto Him of the Father, He did in the manhood perform that action without sin or imperfection; and so, in a life of the utmost extremities of trial and suffering, He did keep the law proper to the fallen creature, and prove that the fallen creature also is good. Adam was good, very good, before he fell; but until Christ came it was not known that the state into which Adam was put after his fall was likewise good; nor could that mystery be shown by any one but the Son of God, informed by the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father. There existed, indeed, in the law, which is holy, and just, and good, the promise that the estate for which it was given was also good, and would yet be proved to be good: for why exhibit a law if that law was never to be honoured? In Christ it was honoured; in Him the goodness of the fallen creature, as a handiwork of God, was proved: and the good will of God did now shine forth upon the children of men, who had now at last one representative in the unsullied presence of God. But, before this could be accomplished, it was needful that Christ should not only come under the law in the very state of one under the law; but that He

should also come under death, because the sons of men had all passed under death. I say, come under death by an act of His own will, just as He took a body by an act of His own will; and in the body, by acts of His own will, did humble Himself out of the Divine nature into the human nature perpetually. For it is, as I judge, a mistake to say, that because Christ had taken upon Him the substance of fallen man which was doomed to die—that therefore His death was not a voluntary act. He died in virtue of that continued love with which He loved the manifestation of His Father's glory, and the salvation of His Church, and the redemption of the world; in virtue of that love which first moved Him to take a human body: "Lo! I come: a body hast Thou prepared for Me." That free-will act, of a self-existing being, whereby being God He became man, is a continued act, or the continuance of an act; which is present in all the actions of the Christ until He was received up into glory, and indeed still forms the work of the Divine nature in the Christ. For the action itself is a true human action, so soon as it can be beheld of man: but before it comes into the region of human vision and human sympathy, there is a Divine part in it from which it deriveth all its merit, and that is the act of willingness on the part of the self-existent one to come into the limited conditions of a human action,—of the action of a fallen creature. And be it further most diligently observed, that it is this very act of self-humiliation, so pleasing in the Father's sight, which doth move the Father's free-will to bestow the Spirit upon the humbled Son, that He may prove how well-pleasing unto the Father is this great act of love. Christ apprehendeth the seed of Abraham, and unites the fallen nature of man to His own person. The Father supplies the Spirit for the sanctification of the human nature; and the Christ thus constituted upholds Himself, and sanctifies Himself, and preserves Himself holy, despite the unholiness of the substance: and thus is the covenant between the Father and the Son fulfilled: on His part it is a continued act of humiliation into the manhood; on the Father's, a continual act of supplying the Spirit, unto the faith of His Son thus condescending. In the exercise, therefore, of that free-will of the self-existent Divine nature, which moved Christ to become man, and which actuated Him, in all His human life constituting the essential and meritorious part of every action, though to us unseen and unfelt, did He go into death, and lay down His life which no man had power to take from Him. He laid it down of free-will, which free-will He possessed as God. He voluntarily came also into that necessity and obligation of a fallen creature, that it must die; for the necessity of the human

nature to die, as being created and fallen, and doomed in Adam, taketh not away the free-will action of the Divine Person who informed it. But in order to prove that temptation also of the children, and all that is behind the scenes, He gave Himself unto the death; as He had come under the law, though He had no ceremonial or moral sin to be atoned for, so He came under death, though as a Person he had done no offence against the Divine law which could have fastened death upon Him. I say not but that it was consistent with and included in the first act of His taking a body, that all this should follow; that that act of humiliation made all the rest as it were, necessary; but necessary only, inasmuch as the act of the Divine Person, willing to be humbled, included all the rest, because there is in the Godhead "no variableness, neither any shadow of turning." And indeed I feel the greatest difficulty in speaking of Christ's Godhead from this very circumstance, that time does not apply to the actings of the Divine nature, but to the actings of the human nature only.

But let the matter stand as it is set forth above; and let us now proceed to examine wherein consisteth the excellency of this title, "First-begotten from the dead." By His descending into the grave He received from the Father a more plentiful anointing of that Holy Spirit than He could receive by entering into life. In the virgin's womb He could but receive that portion of the Holy Spirit which was proper to the body of His weakness, and enabled Him to overcome all the enemies of flesh and blood, and to keep Himself holy, harmless, and undefiled, and to present Himself a pure offering on the cross for our sins. But in the grave He was able to receive that "might, and power, and glory, which exalted Him above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name which is named in this world and in that which is to come." And why? Because He had achieved a great and mighty purpose of God, to make His glory visible to the infirm and fallen nature: He had retrieved what seemed to be, but really was not, a disappointment and defeat of the Divine purpose. He had brought up the creature, clean and holy; He had shown the long interrupted continuity of the Father's purpose: and, no doubt, when His body lay in the tomb, His soul, still united to His divine nature, was achieving greater victories over the spiritual rulers of the apostasy, and accomplishing yet higher mysteries of the Divine purpose, than were exhibited in the flesh: for He passed into death that He might destroy him which had the power of death, that is the devil; and therefore, "God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things on earth, and things under the earth."—In these encounters of His soul, I believe He received the new power of the Spirit; and having done His Father's will in that unknown sojourn, having destroyed the king of death, He came and opened the strong man's house, and took His body from the strong man's hold: and this I believe to be the pre-eminence of the title "First-begotten from the dead." It proved, that in the fallen creature the enemy of the fallen creature was overcome; that God's first creation of man had stood its ground against God's enemies, and, though sorely weakened in the conflict, had overcome them: it proved that a fall in the creature was only a step towards the proper end and design of its creation. It unfolded the great secret of God, in permitting a devil, and apostate angels, and fallen man. Light broke in upon the darkness, and life moved strangely in the midst of death. The Father's greatest power was seen, the Father's greatest goodness and grace; the Son's greatest devotedness and dutifulness unto his Father, and love unto that form of creature in which the Father had chosen to manifest Himself; the Holy Spirit's greatest might, and most excellent glory, in constituting the creature in eternal and unchangeable blessedness. All this cometh out of the resurrection of Christ: and as in virtue of His holy life He became the possessor of holiness, with which to purify the flesh of as many as believe upon Him, whence He is said to have contended with sin in the flesh; so, by His being the first-begotten from the dead, hath He obtained for Himself the power of the resurrection, by which to quicken whom He will: and it is in consequence of this that He becometh the Head of the Church, which liveth by the power of His resurrection, seeing baptism is an ordinance for receiving the grace of the resurrection. We are buried with Him in baptism, and also risen with Him from the dead. In order, therefore, to constitute a person baptized in spirit and truth, and in order to constitute a church of baptized persons, it is absolutely necessary that we should have imparted a power of Christ's resurrection, which proceedeth from His being the first-begotten from the dead. I consider this title, therefore, "the First-begotten from the dead," to be a title of His priesthood, both inasmuch as it embodies in itself His death as a sacrifice for sin, and also His resurrection as our High Priest and Intercessor with God. And further into this title of Christ we cannot enter at present.

"The Prince of the kings of the earth." Before He ascended up on high Christ said to His disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Now whosoever hath the power, is sovereign or prince. So also in the 2d Psalm, which by St Paul is applied to the time of His resurrection, it is said, "Yet have I set

my King upon my holy hill of Zion . . . . ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And still more distinctly in the 110th Psalm: "The Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool . . . . The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." I observe that this office of power is contained in the very name, The Lord, which is the highest title of sovereignty in heaven and in earth, seeing that Paul (Phil. ii. 11) maketh His exaltation to consist in this—that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Yea even is this dignity contained in the title, David's Lord; for David was the king of the kingly nation, and therefore a king of kings: seeing the Jewish nation have the promise of being made a nation of kings, or a nation giving laws and religion, and exercising offices of power and authority over the other nations of the earth. Therefore to be David's Lord is the highest title of power upon the earth. At His birth Christ was announced to king Herod, and all his court, by this title, "King of the Jews." The wise men came unto Herod, and said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." In the presence of Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, the representative of the fourth and last universal monarchy, when questioned He took the title King of the Jews. And he announced Him to the heads of the Jewish nation, "Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" and in three most notable languages in the world he wrote over His cross, "The King of the Jews." "And the chief priests said, Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend from the cross." He was King, therefore, at His birth and in His humiliation, though He humbled himself to become as a malefactor, and even below a malefactor. But though He concealed the majesty of heaven and earth in His person, as the Son of God, concentrating therein all holiness and all power, yet was He not a King manifested and declared, until He arose from the dead: as St Peter, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, doth conclude, "Therefore know assuredly, that this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, hath God made both Christ and Lord." This is further manifest in what St Paul writes to the Ephesians, i. 20: "When he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, both in this world, and in that which is to come." In like manner it is said by Paul in the first chapter to the Romans, 4th verse, that "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the

dead." And the same truth is, I think, declared in the text, by His being entitled First-begotten from the dead, immediately before He is entitled Prince of the kings of the earth. We are, therefore, to understand, that though it was both according to the dignity of His person, and the truth of God's purpose, that He should be proclaimed a King upon earth that He might fulfil the ancient promise concerning Messiah, the Prince; yet was He not then in kingly office, nor were the kings of the earth responsible to Him for their jurisdictions: even as, though He was a High Priest, He did not minister in the temple, neither could minister, because the priesthood of Levi was not yet dissolved. So that, when by death and the resurrection from the dead He entered into His priestly, He did also enter into His kingly office; which two in Him are not separate, but one; because He is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec: for it was not possible that He could be at once a subject and a King. Furthermore, because God's prophetic word had given the earth, and especially the Jewish nation, into the hands of the fourth great kingdom, it was not proper that Christ immediately after His resurrection should take upon Him the kingdom of the earth, until the purpose of God concerning the fourth great kingdom, which had enthralled His people, should be accomplished. The Romans, the beast with ten horns, and the little horn, had as much privilege to tyrannise over the Jews for their appointed time, as the Levites had to exercise the priesthood: and if Christ revealed not Himself as Priest until by the death of His body He had brought all sacrifice to an end; so neither can He reveal Himself as King until the times of the Father, with respect to the adversity of the Jewish people, shall have been accomplished. For it is manifest that the Jewish people cannot both be in a state of subjection and in a state of power. In a state of subjection, however, they are appointed by the Word to continue till the times of the fourth monarchy be accomplished; and therefore in a state of power they cannot be until that same power shall have been dissolved. And seeing Christ was proclaimed King of the Jews before He was proclaimed Prince of the kings of the earth: seeing, also, that when He sitteth as a King, it is to be upon Mount Zion and in the throne of David, which are given to the Gentiles to be trodden under foot until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled: it followeth clearly, that there was a time during which he should be hidden from the sight and sovereignty of those who were taught to look for Him as their King. Since His resurrection, therefore, He is a Priest in office, but a King only announced; because the Levitical priesthood, which let or hindered his priesthood, is removed, but the ten-horned

empire, which let His empire, is not removed out of the way: so that the division of His office into Prophet, Priest, and King, is not only correct in the idea, but is correct also in the succession of time. He was a Prophet, an actual Prophet, when He could not be an actual Priest; and He is an actual Priest now, when He cannot be an actual King. And because it were not proper that He should be manifested as a Priest, until He is manifested as a King also; for He is to be shown as a Priest upon His throne, (Zech. vi.)—a Priest after Melchizedec's order; therefore doth Paul represent Him (Heb. ix.) as having passed through the veil of the heavens, and presenting his sacrifice in the presence of God for us. In confirmation of these ideas, we shall observe, that in the visions of this book Christ hath no crown until after the crowns pass from the heads and horns of the beast, at the end of the period of time, times, and half a time, or forty and two months. Then, when there are no longer any crowns upon the beast, he is presented unto us (Rev. xiv.) as a harvest-man, with a crown upon his head; and, in like manner, in chap. xix. as coming forth from heaven with many crowns. But anterior to this point of the vision, he is not so represented: but he is represented as a Priest, or sacrifice, as a Lamb that had been slain; yet distinct from Him that sitteth on the throne, (chap. iv.); or, as we may say, from Himself in His royal priestly office, because there never shall be any other manifestation of the Father upon a throne than Christ in His royal priestly office. In further confirmation of this I may refer to what He says to His apostles, in Acts i., who asked him, saying, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" To which he answered, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power;" signifying thereby that their question involved a knowledge of the times and the seasons which had to run, before he could restore the kingdom unto Israel: that is, as I believe, the time, times, and half a time, during which the little horn was to make war against the saints, and during which they were to be given into his hand, and at the end of which the beast with ten horns, or the Roman empire, in its last form, is to be destroyed; till which destruction the Jews are under subjection, and, I may say, Christ also, who is of the seed of the Jews, or at least, if not under subjection, yet not competent to take the power. I mean to say, in one word, that the word which Christ spake by the mouth of David and all the Prophets, concerning the times of the Jewish subjection, under the Gentile monarchy, is the reason why Christ, being proclaimed Prince of the kings of the earth, hath not yet taken upon Him the exercise of that dignity; yet the proclamation is not the less momentous and

effectual on that account: for therein is asserted for Him by God the supremacy over all kings, and magistrates, and trustees of power whatsoever, and wherever the gospel is preached, this truth is preached also, That Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth. —God is the fountain-head and origin of all power. He alone hath power over the creatures whom He hath made. This power He hath delegated unto magistrates, either by appointment of His word, or by constitution of His providence; for the ordinance of governor and governed, of magistrates and subject, is, we may affirm, as constant an ordinance as that of father and child. This power, which God had delegated unto others, whom therefore He calleth by His own name Gods, He doth in that name of His Son, Lord, confer upon Jesus of Nazareth: and in this book of the Revelation Jesus of Nazareth is shown exercising the functions of Supreme Head, both of church and of state. His name Lord, or Prince of the kings of the earth, doth mean nothing less than that the Father hath given unto Him all power in heaven and on earth; and if so, then let all power be exercised in His name. Let kings reverently bow before Him; let judges and princes of the earth kiss the Son. The name Jesus importeth Him to be the only Saviour of sinners; the name Christ importeth Him to be the only Giver of holiness; the name Lord importeth Him to be the only Possessor of power. The first hath respect to man as a sinner needing forgiveness; the second hath respect to man as a subject of holiness; the third hath respect to man, as the subject of obedience. As a Prophet, Christ took up into himself the prophetical office, which had subsisted in other men, who did, as it were, keep it for Him until He came; and therefore, He is called by distinction above them all, "the Faithful Witness," and truth is said to have come by Him. As a Priest, He took up into Himself the substance of all priesthood, possessing the anointing, and having within Himself all the holy oil for anointing others. As a King, He sums up in Himself all power whatsoever; and that power which acknowledges Him not is in rebellion against God; and that power which acknowledgeth Him is on the side of God. Upon the one, He shall rain fire and brimstone, and furious storms: on the other, He shall shine ever with the light of His countenance. "Be wise, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, O ye judges of the earth. Serve God with fear; kiss ye the Son, lest ye perish from the way: when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that stay on him."

These names of Christ, which I have sought to explain, are, to every one who believeth on Him, full of the greatest confidence and sweetest consolation. First, the name of "Jesus," appropriated to Him

because He saves His people from their sins, strikes upon the ear of the self-condemned soul like the reprieve of Heaven, and filleth it with an abiding joy and gratitude, both unto God who sent His Son, and unto His Son who came to save us. And this name Jesus is not of a temporary application to the moment of our conversion under a reprieve from the curse of the broken law, but doth accompany the sinful and ever-sinning soul with its ever-present consolation under the godly sorrow of repentance, and the abiding sense of indwelling sin.—Next, the name of "Christ," or the Anointed One, doth present Him unto the soul of the believer as the great fountain of refreshing waters in the desert, and the food of strength on the wearisome way. It reminds us, also, of His own dark and lonely sojourn, when through the unction of the Holy Ghost He bare our sins, and carried our sorrows, and offered Himself a sacrifice without blemish and without spot. This blessed name, the Christ, doth present Him as the Anointed Man, the pillar and column of human Majesty, the Man-God; our Priest also and Intercessor before the Throne, who is able to succour all that are in like manner tempted. Of these things think, while ye call him Christ.—"The Faithful Witness" presents Him to us as the Word that was with God, and that was God, in whom is seen, as in a glass, the revealed mystery of the Divine nature, intelligibly and sensitively brought into the regions of the creatures, that they might have the boundless Infinite, in which they lost themselves, brought within such form and dimensions that they could comprehend it. No longer, then, doubt, no longer disbelieve, His word, seeing it is the faithful witness of God. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Therefore is He the object of all faith, and the invisible Godhead which He would reveal is the end of all faith. When, therefore, you doubt, remember that He is the Faithful Witness, and doubt no more.—"The First-begotten from the dead." Take this for your assurance in all the trials, diseases, and sufferings of the present life, in the valley of the shadow of death itself, that "He hath risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Upon this let your trust rest when soul and body part asunder, and the framework of the world is dissolved. When the foundations of the earth are all out of course, remember that He beareth up the pillars of it; and let it be unto you for the assurance, that all which is written concerning the saints that sleep in Jesus will be fulfilled. That He will be the plague of death, and of the grave the destruction; and that the saints shall rule with Him over death and over the grave, when He shall be manifested as Prince of the kings of the earth,

and they shall reign with Him in glory. That ye may be mindful of these truths, and, "naming the name of Jesus, depart from all iniquity;" and naming the name of Christ, and calling Him Faithful Witness, may believe with all your hearts: and calling Him First-begotten from the dead, may rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and naming Him "Prince of the kings of the earth," may ever worship Him as your king: and teachers, princes, and judges so to do by, reverencing them as His vicegerents, I do most fervently pray.

After this sublime benediction, the apostle, without a connecting word, being filled and ravished with the glorious names and offices of Christ, bursts forth into a sublime strain of thanksgiving in these words: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." This doxology which bursts from the ravished heart of the apostle, is in unison with those which the Church in heaven, the angels, and every creature, utter unto the Lamb, when He receiveth the seven-sealed book from the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, (chap. iv. v.) And I believe that the apostle's mind was filled with the glory of that very vision when these words burst from his lips. For we have seen that the style of the Godhead which he had used in the benediction is derived thence. What less, then, shall we make of this glorious utterance of the apostle, than that in his person, as the only surviving apostle, the seer, and the declarer of these things to the Church, the whole believing Church on earth doth join her note to that of the celestial choir above, in ascribing glory and dominion to the Lamb that was slain? It consisteth, as all praise from the creature must consist, of thanksgivings unto the Lord Jesus Christ for His wonderful acts done unto the children of men; and first is acknowledged His love: "Unto Him that loved us;" because therein consisteth the preciousness of His work, that it was done out of love. Not for any advantage to Himself, nor merely as part of a Divine scheme for accomplishing Divine ends, but out of love; which moved Him to undertake, and to accomplish what He undertook. And whose love is this? The love of Him who for our sakes came into the world. And who was this? The Son of God, very God, of very God. We therefore conclude beyond a doubt, that in the Godhead there is an affection of love unto the creature, even under its sinful state: out of which affection doth originate all the work of our redemption, which is not unto the end of making God to love us, but from the source and origin of His love, unto the end of our loving Him; as it is written, "We love him because he first

loved us." Love is that which moved Godhead in the person of the Son to do for man what He did. This is that in God which Christ revealed, and in the revelation of which God is glorified. No doubt the great end of God is to manifest and communicate that which is in Himself; and that in Himself which is communicated by the work of Incarnation, is His love to fallen sinners, unto the end that fallen sinners, without any exception, might put their trust in Him. And the Church whom the Holy Ghost hath united unto Christ and renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, so far from being, as it were, carried out of the sphere of God's love to the sinner, is only the more ensphered therein; and having the same mind that was in Christ, when He condescended so low, she becometh God's witness; testifying His love and grace unto the worthless. And herein standeth her election, that God hath chosen her to be the companion of His love, and solicitude, and travail for the souls of the most abject of the children of men; and therefore, so far from forgetting what she once was, the elected Church doth ever remember her former vileness, meanness, and wickedness. She doth keep up in faithful memory her kindred to sinful flesh, and acknowledge the sinfulness, and commiserate the wretchedness thereof, and by how much she feeleth herself exalted into a purer, and holier, and more glorious region, by so much the more doth she pity those who are yet in their sins; and ascribe all the difference to the glory of His grace, who hath loved her and washed her from her sins in His own blood.

The second expression of the thanksgiving of the Church on earth, "And washed us from our sins in His own blood," containeth in it a vast measure of doctrine, expressed in brief compass, yet by such terms as must be intelligible to every one who knows the Old Testament Scriptures. The figure is taken from that ordinance of the law of Moses, which required those who might minister as priests to wash themselves before they entered upon their holy office: "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water," (Exod. xxix. 4.) This was the first act unto the preparing a priest for his ministry. And as if to keep it in constant remembrance, they washed their hands and feet every time they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, (Exod. xl. 30.) Now the apostle, in the passage before us, exalting God for having constituted us kings and priests, doth not forget the necessity of a previous ablution, which he expresseth in these words: "Hath washed us from our sins in His own blood." What those sins are, how abhorrent to God and to nature itself, from which they had been

washed, we find enumerated in the 6th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, with this preface and with this conclusion, "that such shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And lest any one should suppose his sins to be of a yet deeper dye, we have it declared, that "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," (1 John i. 7.) The fact that there is a Church in the world is, therefore, to all men the assurance that there is a way of forgiveness opened to them in the Gospel; "a fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness." And with this fact before their eyes, of a Church brought out of the grossest impurities and deepest depravities of human nature, the unbelieving world is convicted, not only by the word of God's Gospel preached, but by the word of God's Gospel effected in the midst of them. But our text contains not only the fact of those who are God's kings and priests having been as to their original condition no less depraved than other men, and washed thoroughly from that depravity, but likewise containeth the method and means by which this purgation is effected: "Washed us from our sins in His own blood." Now, for the explanation of this, the method of our sanctification, it is necessary again to have recourse to the fountain-head of Divine doctrine, which is the law of Moses. Therein there was appointed, for almost every transgression of the law, some sacrifice of blood; and in general when any one for ceremonial uncleanness was put apart from the congregation of the Lord, before they could be restored again they had to be sprinkled with what was called the water of purification. Now this water of purification, whereof the ordinance is contained in the 19th chapter of the book of Numbers, was composed of pure water and the ashes of an heifer mingled therewith. The heifer was to be red, without a spot: she was slain without the camp; she was burned whole with all her appurtenances. Cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, which are all red, to denote the blood of Christ, were cast into the burning flame; the ashes were gathered up and mingled in the water, and with that mixture every one must be sprinkled, who, for any ceremonial uncleanness, hath been put away from the presence of the congregation of the Lord. To this ordinance the apostle maketh reference, in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews, where he expressly treateth of the sacrifice of Christ, saying, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" There is still another ordinance in the law of Moses, to which, I think, our text carrieth a yet more express and

distinct reference. It is written in the 29th chapter of Exodus, at the 21st verse, and required that the priests and their garments should be sprinkled with blood and with the holy anointing oil mixed together. And these two preliminaries to the consecration of a priest, washing himself with water, and sprinkling him with blood, seem to me united in one in our text, in the expression "washed us in His blood." But the question still remains, what is the meaning both of the Old Testament ordinance and the New Testament expression? What proportion is there between the blood of a man, Christ Jesus, and the taking away the sins of many men,—of the whole world? as it is written, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And again, "who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The answer to this question, which hath filled the world with disputations, is not of such difficulty if we bear in mind what hath been said on the preceding topic, that love to sinners is an original principle and uncaused affection of the Divine Mind. But if we adopt the contrary notion, that something must go before in the way of cause before God can love a sinner, that He must be bent to it, won over, supplicated and propitiated by something out of Himself, some price, ransom, or suffering, then a radical error is introduced into the reasoning, which will confuse and worse confound it. But setting this to a side, and well believing that God is love, and that out of this love all His actings toward us proceed; well believing, also, that Christ is God, and out of God doeth and can do nothing, and that Christ's work is not something out of God done, but something by God and in God done, and therefore not a cause, but an effect, of God's disposition of love to sinners; we will undertake in one paragraph to lay out asufficient answer to this great question, How doth the blood of a man avail to the taking away of sin?

The blood of Christ signifies the life of Christ. The blood of Christ as an outward thing to Himself, in which another may be washed, doth signify that life offered up in death; and Christ doing the act of washing us in His blood, doth signify that, though dead, He liveth still. Moreover, from the passage quoted above from the Hebrews, we learn that "through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot." In other words, that His life was a spotless, sinless life; His death, the death of a man who had never done iniquity. The question then is, when rendered into common language, How should the death of a guiltless man, who rose from the dead and liveth still, take away the guilt of sin from other men? Now this question leadeth to another, How was the guilt of sin brought upon men? And the answer to this is, By the sin of one

man. This, then, being the fact, and that an ultimate fact, without cause or reason of any kind that we can see or enunciate, the co-relative of that fact is, that by the righteousness of one man the sin should be taken away. The removal of sin, *en masse*, waited only for a man who should yield perfect holiness. This man was the God-man, God in human nature, who resisted and overcame all sin and death, and in virtue of this performance put away all sin. This is the sum of the apostle's reasoning in the 5th chapter of the Romans, concluding with these words, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many were made righteous."—If it be objected to this, that it maketh our redemption to stand rather in the life than in the death of Christ, I answer, that the apostle doth so in the 6th chapter of the Romans, that the Psalmist doth so in the 40th Psalm, which the apostle quotes in the 10th chapter of the Hebrews, and that our Lord Himself, before He expired on the cross, said, "It is finished." The meritoriousness of Christ's passion standeth not in His death alone, but in every feeling, sympathy, and acting of His life, ever straitening itself from infinitude into limits of flesh. Christ's meritoriousness with the Father is not because He receiveth so much suffering in consideration of which He forgives sin; for I have shown above that He hath it in Him essentially to forgive sin; but the meritoriousness consisteth in the Godhead being thus proved superior to sin, and shown gracious to the sinful. Now, because the death of Christ is the great act by which the Godhead proveth Himself superior to sin, whose great work is death, therefore Christ's dying hath a pre-eminence above every other action done by Him in the days of His flesh. Death is, as it were, sin fixed and concreted in a state or condition of creation. It is like a cutting short of the Creator's work, a dismantling of its glory and beauty, a destroying of its very subsistency; a chasm which drinketh up the stream of God's beneficence, and strangely perplexeth the order of His goodness; which hiatus or chasm of being to destroy, or rather to make the multitudinous life which it hath swallowed up, to appear again in a perdurable form, this great object to accomplish of destroying death, and bringing life and immortality to light, was the great object and constitutes the great meritoriousness of Christ's death, so as that His resurrection, bringing up flesh, the monarch of matter, in a new and eternal form of glory and of strength, doth demonstrate all these things:—God's holiness first of all, in that even His Son joined to the fallen thing should not prevent it from dying; God's love to the fallen thing, clasping it in His embrace, and carrying it through the deepest abysm safe unto the right hand of the Majesty on high; God's

separate being from the creature, which despite the creature's destruction in the absence of all its power, and in the presence of death and corruption, doth give it a power, not its own, proving that there is a power without and beyond the creature, through which the creature is raised from the grave of its own being and made to live eternally. These, and many other, yea, I may say, all other essential attributes of God, and very being of God Himself, are all made to appear by the death and resurrection of Christ; and herein, not in the quantity of suffering, lies the meritoriousness of Christ's death. Now, that this should extend itself to men, yea, that it should extend itself to all, inasmuch as it shows the grace of God to all, this is a truth, not demonstrable by a balance account of suffering against suffering, and merit against merit; nor demonstrable from any other method which logic can devise, but simply by seeing it to be the constitution of God that it should be so; which constitution we see in the coming of the sin through one man, and thereby are prepared for receiving in the coming of the righteousness likewise by one man. It is God's pleasure to conclude the race guilty in Adam: it is His pleasure to conclude the race innocent and guiltless in one man. This I believe to be the root of the matter; and to attempt to get lower is, if I err not, to lose ourselves in questions of words and vain speculation.

But while this is the true account of the condition whereinto man fell, and out of which by the death and resurrection of Christ, he hath been brought, and in which the world now standeth, all independent of any volition of its own, it is not the whole of the matter contained in these words: "And washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us kings and priests unto God." This implies not only the common benefit of His death to all, but the special benefit of His death unto the Church. Everything in Christ's incarnation, resurrection, exaltation, and glory, done by the Father, is done for all; but everything which from His ascension into glory, Christ doth for the Father, by the Spirit, is done for those only whom the Father hath given to Him. Christ, from the time He entered into His reward, and was constituted the depository of the Holy Ghost, and thereby the Head of the Church, acteth, I say, only unto those whom the Father hath given unto Him. This is properly the work of the election, the work of Christ in the Spirit; the work of Christ in the flesh is not a work of election, but a work of common redemption of fallen manhood.—Now forasmuch as in the passage before us He is the agent in the washing of us, the work of election is here included. Our version might lead one to imagine that it was a past, and completely past act; but this is not the case in the original, where the time is neither past, present,

nor to come, but general indefinitude, to express an action begun and going on, and to go on; "Unto Him, loving us, and washing us from our sins in His blood." This work of purification by the blood of Christ, unto the end of royal priesthood, was, as I have said above, foreshown and foreshadowed in the Levitical ordinance, by sprinkling the person with the water of separation. Now to do this act, there wanted both a priest and a water of purification; and so for the antitype of it we want a Priest, which is Christ ascended up on high; and a ground of purification, which is His own guiltless death. His guiltless death gives the means of cleansing; and it is a means of cleansing co-extensive with the uncleanness. But His acceptation on high and installation in the high-priesthood of the heavens, gives us the Priest, without whom the purification could not be actually performed. Now when the purification had been by the priest performed, then was the unclean person joined to the congregation of Israel, whom the Lord had promised to make into a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. (Exod. xix. 6.) And thus the separated person, who dwelt apart, was joined to the kingdom of priests. So we, in our natural estate, being aliens from God, and put apart from His honourable society, do, when washed by Christ with His own blood, receive admission into the society and fellowship of God, to be used by Him for His kings and priests. This same truth was beautifully taught by the other ordinance to which we referred; and according to which, before a priest could minister in the holy place, and handle the holy things, he must be sprinkled not with blood alone, nor yet with oil alone, but with oil and blood mingled together; blood of the offered sacrifice, oil of the holy, consecrated, anointing oil, composed according to God's own receipt, and upon pain of death defended from other use; wherein the blood denoted the most precious blood of Christ, available for all ends of purgation; and the oil denoted the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which Christ received without measure, and with which we must be anointed before we can serve the office of kings and priests, before we can eat the shewbread which cometh down from heaven, and walk in that holy light which the wicked, though it shineth upon him, apprehendeth not. Whoso, therefore, hath received this anointing from the Holy One, doth well to consider himself as righteous, wholly sanctified and redeemed. Yea, well doth he to enter boldly into the holy place, by that new and living way which Christ hath consecrated through the veil, that is, his flesh. To hang back and hide ourselves because of the shame of this sinful nature still cleaving to us, is neither to know, nor yet to honour the Father and the Son. It is to be ignorant of the method of God, where ignorance

is neither good nor safe. It is to doubt or to disbelieve the power of God to bring a holy and acceptable service out of an unholy nature. And what is this but to deny the work of God in flesh, which in this, and in this alone, consisted: that out of an unholy nature He did, in the person of His Son, bring a most holy and acceptable offering,—the only offering that is holy and acceptable? But if, indeed, our theological babes (and they are hardly worthy so good a name) will deny that God wrought His work in a fallen, and in itself unholy nature, and thence educed a perfect manhood to be the germ of perfect manhood, in like wise redeemed; if these gainsayers of, or triflers with, most awful and most glorious truth, be permitted to seduce the Church into the belief that the nature in which He lived, and moved, and had His being on earth, was a nature better than, or different from, ours; then all light is quenched, all hope is sealed up, all consolation defeated, all boldness slain.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father;" or, as it is, being literally rendered, "And He made us kings and priests to that God and Father of His." Whereon I remark, first, the setting aside of grammatical rules, in joining the participle with the indicative mood of the verb, of which voluntary inaccuracies we shall find many instances in this book; whereof the matter is so vast, and the march so grand, and the allusions so manifold, as to force it, in a manner, out of the rules proper for ordinary discourse. Wherefore this, in the present case, should have been adopted, I know not; except it be as a verbal quotation from the 19th chapter of the Book of Exodus; where God, having called Moses up into the Mount of Sinai, made through him this overture to the children of Israel (ver. 5): "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." To this promise reverting in his mind, and having seen the fulfilment thereof in these visions, having heard the Church in heaven sing (ver. 10,) "And has made us unto our God kings and priests;" and having seen the throne of these royal priests planted on the earth, (xx. 6;) the apostle, in his preface to the book, doth triumphantly quote that first overture of God towards a covenant, as now fulfilled upon the Church. "He hath made us kings and priests," (or, as Griesbach prefers to read, "hath made us a kingdom, priests to God and his Father.") To this same overture of the covenant, being the first words spoken by the mediator Moses, and like God's first words containing the substance of all which follows, the apostle Peter maketh reference in these words of his First Epistle, chap. ii. 9; "But ye are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people." Christ, the only Mediator, having baptized us in the Red Sea of His blood, and washed us from our sins therein, ascended up unto God on high, and sent down from thence the Holy Spirit to anoint and set apart those for kings and priests whom the Father chose unto that dignity; and in this book of the Apocalypse is given to the Church the history of her coming unto the kingdom, the events of her pilgrimage in the wilderness, between the time when, like David, she was anointed and the time when she comes to sit on David's throne. To that dignity, therefore, unto which the tribes of Israel were sealed of God by covenant, and to which they shall yet come in the fulness of the times (Isa. lxi. 6;) being truly the royal priestly nation of the earth, at once set apart for heads of government and worship; —to this dignity John addresseth the Church, the election from all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, as being designed and set apart by the washing of the blood of Christ, which is the anointing of the Holy Ghost. This dignity the Jews shall attain among the nations in the age to come, as is abundantly declared in all the Prophets, and especially in the Prophet Zechariah, chap. xiv. 16. But we Christians, who are Jews not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, having been baptized out of flesh and blood into a spiritual body, which we shall realise in the resurrection; to us, I say, a higher regiment and a holier priesthood appertains, even the pre-eminent dignity of sitting upon Christ's throne (Rev. iii. 21,) and ruling the nations with that manner of rule and government with which He shall rule, (Rev. ii. 26.) This dignity of kings and priests unto God—or, more literally, kings and priests for God—is, I conceive, nothing less than, under God, to govern all the works which He hath created and made, with all the creatures which, in the way of generation, shall people them all. God hath a created world, and He put the man Adam in the governance thereof. But Adam fell from his lordship into miserable bondage; whereupon God prepared to provide for Himself another King, who should be worthy to hold the reins of the created world. And this King He found in Christ; whom, after proving His faithfulness,—alone faithful against a world in rebellion,—He promoted to be Lord of all.—But herewith ended not His scheme: for no sooner is Christ ascended into the heavens, than He receiveth power from God to bring many sons unto the glory of the same royal priesthood. And those whom the Father giveth unto Him, Christ doth straightway wash from their defilements, and proceed to furnish with gifts, and graces, and ornaments, and powers which may accomplish them for the high dignity to which they have been elected, of ruling the universe of God.—What, now, may mean

these many kings and priests? Is not Christ Lord of all? wherefore then lords many, and priests many? I answer, Yes. Christ is Lord of all, and only High Priest. Yet not the less be there lords many, and priests many; who being by Him furnished for their high employment, and having all their life long experienced their own innate bondage to the creature, and their lordship over it derived only from Christ, shall in the ages to come be the true representatives of His person, and the faithful upholders of His only lordship in the divers regions of creation. How it is to be arranged of God in the ages to come, I take not upon myself to declare at present; but though I were altogether ignorant of the mode and manner thereof, that were no reason for my flinching to declare fully the substance of the words before us; which is, that God is preparing out of fallen manhood a royal family for Himself, whom, under Christ, He may invest with the sceptres and the altars of the created universe; through whom, and through whom alone, every creature shall present the obedience, and the worship, which to Godhead it oweth. And they shall present it unto Christ, with whom they are one, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, beauty of His beauty, and power of His power; and thus the streams of ascending influence shall, from every holy sphere, concentrate to that place where He in Manhood dwelleth; in that New Jerusalem where Emmanuel, God with us, abideth; and there it passeth into the invisible, and is received in the unsearchable bosom of God. The man who calls this a speculation, doth speak unadvisedly with his lips. It is an exposition; the exposition of the words "king and priest for God." Of which double office, as yet realised in no one visible, but only in Christ invisible, though usurped by that son of mischief the hierarch of Rome, this is the glorious soul-satisfying import: that while the king ruleth all, in single majesty, the priest doth offer all in humble worship upon the altar of God; so that what else does this double title signify, but the towering height of all sovereignty, combined with the perfect holiness of all service and worship of the invisible God; who is approached, and approachable only, as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Now what is to be understood by the next expression, "unto, or for, the God and Father of Jesus Christ?" First, in what sense is the invisible Godhead the God of Jesus Christ? and in what sense is He His Father? And, secondly, how doth this connect Him with the sanctified kings and priests? He is the God of Christ, in the same sense in which He is our God; because by Christ He is worshipped. By the word Christ, many do merely understand the eternal Son of God; wherein they err, not knowing the Scriptures. The Christ of God is not the Son in His Godhead, but the Godhead in

the Son made flesh. It is a form of being different from the being of God, inasmuch as the being of God is essentially separate from the creature; the being of Christ is essentially one with the creature: and because one with the creature, the Christ cannot worship Himself, otherwise He worshippeth the creature in Him especially included; and He therefore worshippeth the Being of God separate from the creature: which Being of God containeth Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in their incomprehensible, unsearchable, essential form of existence; which, as hath been explained above, standeth in the person of the Father. It is one part of the Son's humiliation to bring Himself to be the Head of the worshippers, and not the end of worship. As the end of worship He hath given, as the Spirit likewise hath, the glory to the Father, being for their parts contented to become in the sight of the creatures—the former, the head of the worshippers, the latter the mover and sustainer of the worship. And thus the Godhead standeth disclosed, for the knowledge and for the salvation of the creatures. But, beloved, be not deceived, as if we thereby divided the substance of the Christ, or the substance of the Spirit of Christ, from the substance of the Godhead; but being separate subsistencies from the Father, they have power to assume unto themselves those relations to the creature, and to one another, which may best represent and make known, and bring into action the eternal relation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, subsisting in the eternal Godhead, before creation was, or was contemplated. Most truly, therefore, doth Christ call the Father His God and His Father; and most truly do the apostles follow the same style in the introduction to all their epistles. And in the same sense, also, doth He call Him Father in the text, because, though doubtless there existed in the Godhead between God and the Word such a relation as that of Father and Son doth set forth, such a love, such an identity of substance, such an image of person, as makes the eternal Sonship a great head of theology; yet was not this manifested unto creation otherwise than by symbols, until the Word became incarnate of the virgin. During the days of His flesh, He was not manifestly the Son of God, but only by express revelation of the Spirit known to be such; until his resurrection from the dead, which declared him to be "the Son of God with power," (Rom. i. 4.) As we shall likewise be declared by our resurrection from amongst the dead to be the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19); which calling we at present enjoy, which glory we shall hereafter possess, (1 John iii. 1, 2.) Finally, this dignity of kings and priests, this dignity of sons of God, this privilege of calling God our God and our Father, we have not out of Christ, but in Christ. And in order to have the assurance of

it, the Spirit must unite us to Christ by faith now; and in order to have the reality of it, we must be raised up hereafter in the likeness, in the glory, in the bodily subsistence of the one redeemed and glorified humanity of Jesus Christ. For, as at present we are in the subsistence of the fallen Adam, one with him in form, and feature, and feeling, though separate from him in time and place; so shall we be hereafter one with Christ in form, and feature, and feeling, though separate from Him in time and place. As Adam hath many members, and a dependent world of lower creatures, animate and inanimate, which he doth, as it were, suspend from his own being, and make sharer in his fate without any will exercised on its part, even so doth the Christ of God include many members of the like human substance redeemed and glorified, and doth suspend from His own being a redeemed and glorified world, without any will exercised on its part. And therefore it is, that we kings and priests, who have that standing only in Him, and out of Him were the miserable slaves and bondsmen of sin, do ascribe unto Him who hath done such great things for us, the glory and the dominion, for ever and ever.

We now come to the substance of the doxology, "Glory and strength for ever and ever." In the four doxologies of the 4th and 5th chapters, glory is a common ascription; but dominion or power expressed by the word before us, occurreth only in the doxology pronounced by the creatures. Glory, as it seemeth to me, expresseth the effluence of Godhead; the impression made upon the creature by the Godhead coming forth from the invisible into sight. Before the creature hath had time to resolve the visible manifestation into its several intentions as concerning Himself, that impression which it makes upon Him in the act and article of becoming visible, I understand by glory. It is like the light proceeding from the brilliant sun, ere yet it hath been reflected or refracted by any medium whatever; and, as the refracted ray, could it be gathered together into one, would show its refulgent glory again, so, when any manifestation of Godhead hath been studied in its bearings of grace, mercy, love, power, &c., if you gather it together in the focus of your concentrated thought or action, it taketh the name of glory again; so as that, in giving forth thoughts or acts in accordance with God's revealed will, we are said to glorify Him. Now this glory which is, as it were, the first complete effulgence of the Godhead, and is, likewise, its consummate and concentrated representation, doth stand wholly in Christ; of whom it was said at His birth, "Glory to God in the highest;" of whom it was said long before His birth, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;" and who said immediately before His passion, "Now

is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him: if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." And again, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," (John xvii. 4, 5.) In Him standeth all the glory of God, the glory of His grace, the glory of His mercy, the glory of His justice, the glory of His holiness, and, in one word, the glory of His being. As God in the Shechinah dwelt, and out of the Shechinah spake, and from the Shechinah shot forth His arrows of judgment, so in Christ the true temple, the true glory of the temple, shall God for ever dwell, and thence make known His being and His blessedness, and through Him execute all His behests for ever and ever. This I understand to be the meaning of ascribing glory unto Christ. And by the ascription of strength or dominion, I have to observe, that it is not dominion or princedom merely, which is expressed by another word, (δυναμις;) nor is it physical power, might, and strength, which is expressed by another word, (ισχυς,) both of them in the doxologies of the 4th and 5th chapters; but it is (κρατος) a word derived from an obsolete root, which signifies, to prevail, to be powerful; and the proper meaning, therefore, of the word is potency, validity, victory. And finding it used in the doxology of the creatures and peculiar thereto, I am inclined to understand by it that power which binds everything to its proper sphere, and keeps it in the obedience of its proper law, that which sustains and supports the vigour of every creature, shortly expressed in these words, "And in him all things consist." This represents Him as the basis of creation and its frame-work; as it is written, "Rooted and built up in him," (Col. ii. 7.) And again, "The head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," (ver. 19.) And again, "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," (Eph. ii. 21.) This sustaining might, this power to bring all things out of the dust of death, and to reconstitute all things in an unchangeable and infallible condition, I consider to be the thing signified by the ascription of strength; which we, feeling, and knowing, and believing, that in Christ is our only strength and stability, do therefore unto Christ ascribe it, even as all creatures do the like on the occasion of that glorious installation which the Lamb receiveth from Him that sitteth upon the throne. And to denote the unchangeableness of the glorious constitution in Christ, it is added, "for ever and ever," for ages of ages, for eternity. And to give unto the doxology the fixture of God, there is

added the solemn Amen. Let us, then, with one consent, we who know the Lord, lift up our voice and sing, "To Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

My object in these lectures is strictly exposition, or the setting forth of the matters contained in the Book of Revelation. It is not to discourse of doctrine, nor yet to apply doctrine, but simply to set forth the doctrine which is taught. Nevertheless, I cannot take leave of so pregnant a passage as the doxology without taking a short review of it in its personal application, and showing how the truth contained should come home to our own minds. There ought, then, to be ever present to the soul of every man the conviction that God loveth him, and that the work of God in Christ, and the knowledge of God, communicated by Christ, is for the sake of teaching to sinful men how God loveth them. Did God in Christ create the world, and me, a part of it? It was done in love. Did God humble Himself to be made flesh, and to tabernacle amongst us? It was done in love. Did God, in the Person of the Son, die to redeem me and all mankind? It was done in love. Doth God, by the Spirit of Christ, sanctify me and the elect of God? It is done in love. The holiness of God standeth not in the way of His love, nor doth His love stand in the way of His holiness. The Gospel, at one and the same time, representeth His love and His holiness. For the Gospel is salvation from the consequences of sin, which consequences of sin are the manifest holiness of God. Inasmuch, therefore, as there is a state to be saved from by the Gospel, God's holiness is shown forth; inasmuch as there is salvation from it, God's love is shown forth. And, therefore, the words grace, mercy, salvation, redemption, &c., by which the good tidings are briefly expressed, do present holiness and love kissing and embracing each other, supporting and sustaining each other. For it is the holiness inflicting misery, which gives occasion to the love; and again, the love doth glorify the holiness by producing a holy life in those who receive it; and in those who receive it not, it doth glorify the holiness again, by giving occasion to the judgment, and the penalties of the judgment, which are the pains of hell for ever. The holiness of God, therefore, is no impediment, nor resistance, but otherwise the occasion and precursor of His love; and therefore I say again to every sinner, Thy sin hath brought thee into thy present abjectness, and this thine abjectness hath been the occasion to thee of God's love; therefore be of good courage, and put thy trust in him.

Again, I would say to a sinner, If thy conscience be overwhelmed with the guilt of thy sin, if it be defiled with the stains of many sins, then thou canst have no peace, nor cleanness in the sight of God, otherwise than through the washing of the blood of Christ; that is to say, the conscience whose property it is to apprehend truth, must apprehend the truth of God's being exhibited and demonstrated by the death of Christ, in order to have peace. That act of God's providence, the death of Christ, is the act whereby He showeth forth the light which bringeth hope and joy to the darkened conscience of a sinner. For conscience hath to do with truth, as the eye hath to do with light. The soul is not a material substance to be washed with blood; and besides, blood washes nothing: this is figurative language derived from the Levitical economy, yet representing the great truth that the Messiah must die, and that His dying is the only inlet of hidden knowledge and truth, capable of yielding peace to the troubled soul. And what is this knowledge of God, so comfortable and cheerful, so enlightening and enlivening, which is let in, through the avenue of Christ's death, upon the soul grieving over its trespasses and sins. It is this, that He whom God loved as Himself, was brought under the power of death. In which condition God loved Him not the less, and thence God raised Him through love unto the Headship of creation. Is this all? Yea, I think this is all. And what an all! How all-sufficient for comfort! For what is the sum of that sin and wretchedness which divideth me from God? It is death: "The wages of sin is death:" death is the sum and consummation of sin; the filling up of God's wrath on this side the judgment. Now, what is it that prevents a sinner from consolation, but the miserable misgiving whether God can, or the erroneous conviction that He cannot, be loving him all the while that He is inflicting on him this direful curse. And there wanted an instance, there wanted an experiment to show that God's love might, yea, and did follow the condemned, exiled outcast, into the uttermost wanderings to which he is doomed. To show this, God himself became the outcast and the wanderer, in the subsistence of the Son; and no one doubts that God loves God. It was proved, therefore, in the way most satisfactory, and put beyond a doubt for ever, that God doth love human nature in its miserable sentence of death, when He himself, in the person of the Son, coming into death, arose from death, and proved death to be no obstruction of God's love, to be no sealing up of God's goodness and glory, but only the strait and narrow gate by which we enter into the kingdom. When a soul thus beholding God's love stronger than misery and death, seeth God's love to the human nature of Christ lying in the condition of

death, it hath a ground, and a sufficient ground, for believing that the curse which hath passed upon us, is not a prevention of the love of God, and that into whatever state sin may bring a fallen man, he is still the same object of God's love as he was before, and, believing this, ought to be at peace from the miseries of an evil conscience. For if a guilty man knows that he who is offended against, forgiveth his guilt, and loveth him, and pitieth him, and is labouring to deliver him from all guilt, and hath succeeded, then surely is the sting which stung him taken out. This, then, I believe, is the rendering of the Levitical language into the language of pure reason, or common feeling: that the soul, overwhelmed with a sense of its guilt, doth in the death of Christ, the Son of God, and in His resurrection, get such a view of God's character as gives it ease. But by translating it into the language of natural reason and natural feeling, do I thereby make void the Levitical language, or express dissatisfaction with it? Surely not; for the Levitical language doth embody the whole system of truth, in a series of symbolical facts. The Levitical language is the safeguard of our theology; but it is the part of the minister of the Gospel to explain it to the conscience; because, until it come in contact with the conscience, it is but a carnal ordinance, and not a spiritual truth. Let this, therefore, stand as the personal application of the second part of this glorious doxology, That Christ, as our High Priest above, communicating with us, by the Holy Ghost, doth preserve our conscience clean, and take out the abiding stains of sin, by continually opening to our minds those great truths of God's being, and of His affections to sinful mankind, which, like scattered rays, appear everywhere in His actings, but in their strength, brightness, and beauty, are concentrated in the death and resurrection of Christ, and there only.—Now, with respect to the third part of the doxology, I have this much to say, in the way of practical application; that we are made kings and priests from the time of our believing, though we are not manifested as such until the time of the first resurrection. "The gift of faith is everlasting life;" "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life;" and everlasting life is the life of the priest and king. Beyond a question therefore, in this life also, we have the dignity of priests and kings: we are made so: He *hath made* us so. Now, wherein consisteth our present royal priesthood? In the noblest region of our being. In the power to command and govern ourselves according to God's mind, which none other but the regenerate possess. Enslaved are men to another, who is the devil, great enemy of God and man; but we are free. Emancipated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, through Christ, by His Spirit empowering me, I live a life

in the flesh, to the glory of God. I, not by constraint, but in a heaven-derived liberty and strength, exercise the office of a king, in expelling Satan, the usurper, from manhood, my proper realm, in using every power of my proper kingdom as a weapon against him and his angels, and the world, and the flesh, and all confederate nature: yea, and I take the prey from the strong; I do take every member of my body, and use it against wickedness in high places, I do defy him with my tongue, I do untwist all his cords, I do expose all his snares, I do cut asunder all his toils, and make my escape like a mighty man from the hands of his enemies. Herein, therefore, I put forth the high function of a king. But, besides, in all this I put forth also the holy function of a priest; for, not unto myself I live, but unto God; not unto myself I conquer, but unto God; not for myself I keep my conquests, not for myself I reign over my conquests, but for God; and so I fulfil the office of a priest while I fulfil the office of a king. All my disabused faculties of mind ascend in worship unto God; all my purified faculties of knowledge, reverently worship God in Christ; all my blessed faculties of feeling worship God in the Holy Ghost. I am a priest, by how much I am a worshipper: I am a king, by how much I have wherewith to worship; and this is verily the work of the Spirit upon a man, to make him at once a priest and a king, to give him power, and to make him desire more power for the sake of the glory of God. And though to our grief we see a world lying in the arms of the wicked one; though to our sore pain we see men and things lorded over by Satan; we apprehend by faith, and in hope hold fast that glorious redemption which awaiteth the creatures also, when they likewise shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: and as priests, we pray for that glorious consummation; and as priests, we offer up the doleful lament of a groaning world; and as priests, we sing in its ears the song of its coming joy; and as priests, we prophesy to all the people of the time when Christ, with all His saints, shall come to rule the earth in righteousness, and judge the people in equity. Thus do we fulfil the office of kings and priests unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. After this doxology, and joined to it, by I know not well what connexion—for these be rather the ecstatic utterances of a rapt and ravished mind, than the parts of a regular discourse,—we have the following exclamation: "Behold He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see (eye) Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so.

Amen." After the seer had given to the persons of the blessed Trinity their appropriate names, according to the imagery of this book, and had ascribed to the incarnate and crucified Jesus that glory and dominion with which He had been invested in the heavens, He conceiveth before His sight the glorious image of His Lord, descending in power and great majesty to the earth: very unlike the blinded prophets of this day, who can neither see nor bear to hear of the glorious coming of the Lord, our seer can see nothing else. Everything which had been exhibited to Him of the adversities, persecutions, and apostasies of the Church, is swallowed up in the glory which follows them all. O it is a thing most instructive to all ministers and believers of the Gospel, and especially to all interpreters and readers of this book, to witness in these verses of preface, what were the great matters impressed upon the apostle's mind by all which he had seen and heard. However variously he was moved, as scene followed scene, in the great exhibition of the divine purpose, behold in these few verses, what was the impression which remained fixed and permanent in his mind! That abiding impression was the present glory and the future coming of his Lord. Not the creature, but the Creator; not the history of man, but the history of Christ; not the thought of himself, but the thought of his glorified and coming Lord, was present to his soul. And while he ascribed all glory and dominion to Him for ever and ever, the only event in the ages of ages which he careth to make mention of, is the coming of the Lord: "Behold he cometh with the clouds." This expression, "coming with the clouds," hath its origin in the 7th chapter of the book of Daniel, where, after the fourfold succession of the Church's and the world's oppressors, which are the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires; whereof the latter still endureth, though for the last thirty-seven years it hath been under judgment, and is about to be consumed by the act of God's righteous judgment; after this, I say, the prophet saw in the night visions, "and behold one like the Son of man came in the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and kindreds, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This is the event in the history of God's dealings with the earth which catcheth the eye of the seer, and standeth before Him as the glad and glorious consummation. Now the most momentary glance at Daniel's prophecy will suffice to show that this event is not at the destruction of mankind, nor for their destruction with whatever judgments at-

tended, but contrariwise for the deliverance of all nations from oppression of brutal, bestial force, into the blessed government of Him who cometh with the clouds of heaven. Which should be enough to teach any reasonable person, not only that the coming of the Son of Man is before the termination of mankind, but also that the great event of God's providence toward the world, and of His grace by Christ, is not the final judgment of mankind, but the bringing in of the Son of Man anew into this visible world. If the great event of Christ's glory, and this world's weal, had been the termination of the human race, and their final judgment, why should not the seer have looked at this with transport, instead of looking at Christ's coming with the clouds? To this same event of His coming with the clouds Christ Himself referreth, in that discourse which He delivered to His disciples, for the express object of teaching what should be the sign of His coming, and of the end of the age, (Matt. xxiv. 3.) Surely, when His disciples besought Him for information concerning His coming, and He, the Lord, did set Himself to give them the information which they sought; we may well believe that He would keep to the question, and explain to them the signs of that event which they understood by His coming. And what then doth He say thereof? He tells them, (ver. 27,) that His coming should be to them observable as the lightning, (ver. 28,) that they should find their way to where he was as surely as the eagles do unto the carcase. In verse 29, he describes the shaking of the heavens and the earth, which should precede His coming; and in verse 30 he thus describeth the coming itself: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." And the reason why the tribes of the earth mourn, or as it is in our text, "all nations wail because of Him," is given in the following verses of the same discourse, descriptive of the wickedness, carelessness, and unbelief, under which He should surprise the world, (ver. 37:) "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And then, to show us that there shall be the salvation of a part, as in the case of Noe, and Lot, and Jerusalem, and every other judgment of God, it is immediately added, "Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left; two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." And the divine moral of the

whole is, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." To this coming in the clouds He maketh reference again in His examination before the high priest; and again in the first chapter of the Acts, the angels make reference to it when in a cloud He was carried out of their sight. And again, the apostle maketh reference to it to comfort the Thessalonians over their departed brethren, (1 Thess. iv. 17:) in all which instances the same event is referred to; to wit, the second coming of Christ, with all His saints, to establish His kingdom over all the nations under the whole heaven.*

Besides the two particulars given in the discourse of Matthew, that every eye should see Him, as every eye seeth the lightning, and that all kindreds of the earth should wail because of the judgments which He would bring upon their wicked persecutions of His saints, and confederacies against God; there is a third, mentioned in our text, that they also which pierced Him should see Him with their eyes, for that is the proper meaning of the word ὄψεται. This carries a direct reference to the 12th chapter of the prophet Zechariah, wherein is described the fearful confusion, confounding, and judgment of the nations assembled against Jerusalem, which is called a cup of trembling to all the people round about, and a burdensome stone for all people; being doubtless the same with the judgment of all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat, described by the prophet Joel. In the midst of that universal wail of the nations, great grace is promised to the people of Israel in these words: "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," (Zech. xii. 8–10.) After which cometh the description of a most deep contrition and terrible agony, like the mourning at Hadadrimmon, where the good king Josiah and the host of Judah fell. Now, as we have said above, with respect to the passage in Daniel, so say we in this, that the most

* For the complete refutation of the notion which hath originated within these few years concerning a spiritual coming, we may refer to our work, entitled "The Church and State responsible to Christ, and one another," pp. 479–490.

cursory review of the passage doth teach us, that it describes the godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of; that it is in truth the conversion of the Jewish nation in their own land, their conversion by the sight of God's judgments upon the nations, gathered with open mouth to destroy them. And when they discover that this God who hath gathered them, and who hath delivered them in the agony of their despair, is no other than that Jesus of Nazareth whom they pierced, whom for thousands of years they have spurned and blasphemed; when he standeth before them upon Mount Olivet which is before Jerusalem, and they see that this mighty Saviour of their nation is even He whom their nation hanged on a tree; what an agony of shame, of remorse, of fear, of gratitude, of faith, of love, will overwhelm that people. Then shall that come to pass which is spoken of in the prophets, that "a nation shall be born in a day."

Now to this straightforward interpretation of the things contained in the verse before us—for I lay claim to no ingenuity, but believe that God hath blessed me with ingenuousness to interpret his word—it may be objected thus: But if, as you say, this same Jesus Christ is to gather the Jews, and do such things for them, how should they not know until that moment that it is He who doeth them? To this objection I am nothing loth to give an answer, the rather because it will enable me to explain a point necessary to the understanding of this text, and indeed of all the prophecies. The coming with the clouds spoken of in the passage before us, and in the kindred passages, is uniformly described as being manifest to all: "Every eye shall see him, and all nations shall wail at the sight;" and to this same end of declaring how manifest, as well as glorious it shall be, are the clouds given Him for attendance. What is in the clouds, all behold. They are beyond the region of concealments. Seeing, then, by these similitudes of clouds and lightning, as well as by express declarations, the manifestness of His appearance is declared, how should it be said in other places, that He cometh as a thief in the night? and how should it not be known by the Jewish people, from the instant of His first interference on their behalf, to deliver them from amongst the nations, and to gather them into their own land? The answer, I think, lies in this: There is a sign of the Son of man, as well as a coming of the Son of man; a sign which, according to His own language, appears in the heaven: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." This was a thing well-known amongst the Jews, who were ever asking Him for that sign, which was everywhere promised in the Prophets, (Isa. xi. 10–12.) And the disciples being Jews, and having exactly

the common opinions of their nation, asked Him on that occasion what should be the sign of His coming. Well, and what is that sign? I answer, It is something in the heaven, which appears before He Himself appears. It is not Himself apparent, but the sign that He is about to appear. What it shall be, I know not; but can well conceive that it may be something similar to the pillar of cloud and fire which appeared before the children of Israel, to guide them out of Egypt, and to defend them from Pharaoh and his host, and to guide them through the wilderness, and to bring them into the promised land. Nay, I think there is more than conjecture for this; because it is distinctly prophesied, (Ezek. xliii. 2,) that that very glory which abode with the Jews until the Jewish temple was destroyed, and departed then, (Ezek. x. 1,) shall return again, and rest within the rebuilt temple of Jerusalem. (See Lecture I. pp. 60–62.) But be this as it may, there is to be a sign. Now of this sign it is nowhere asserted that it shall be visible to all the nations, from the beginning of its appearance; or being visible, that it shall be known by them to be the Son of man, or yet the sign of the Son of man. By this sign now apparent unto the Jewish people, they shall be gathered and redeemed by a strong hand out of all nations, and brought up into their own land, when it is the pleasure of the Lord so to do.—And under this banner of the glory of God everything needful to the gathering, the sorting, and settling of the tribes, according to the last chapters of Ezekiel, will, I believe, take place. And if the nations will oppose themselves to the emancipation of the people, I believe, that as heretofore, out of this sign shall come their discomfiture. It shall be a wall of fire around the host, and a glory in the midst of them. Nor do I doubt that the nations according as they congregate against Israel, shall come within the vision and the experience of its direful power. Yet all the while I do believe that the children of Israel shall not know that Jesus of Nazareth is the person who out of that glory spreadeth the curtain of His sanctuary round about them. Nor shall the nations know that it is He; but the wise shall understand. Those that believe shall understand. And thus, under the ensign or sign of the Son of man, shall these great and momentous acts of war and of destruction come about, as heretofore they did at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness; and still the person of Jesus of Nazareth shall not be known, nor His power, to be present therein. And I believe, moreover, that against the Ten Tribes defended by this supernatural power, Antichrist, that is, the beast and the false prophet, shall be bold enough to conceive and carry on war; and that this is the meaning of His ten kings making war with the Lamb and those

with Him, (Rev. xvii. 15:) but He shall be broken upon the holy Mount of God, (Daniel xi. 45;) and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin being delivered from this last king of Babylon, the whole nation of the Jews shall quietly settle themselves according to the order of Ezekiel, chapter xlviii. And against them thus settled, and thus defended, and thus secured, shall Gog and Magog come up, (Ezek. xxxviii.;) that is, the head of the Greek Church, with the remains of the first three of Daniel's kingdoms, and a portion of all peoples; and around Jerusalem shall be fearful slaughter (Zech. xii., xiii., xiv.,) in which the Jews shall mightily prevail; but yet not without sore experiences of the Lord's anger against them for their continued unbelief, and their blasphemy against His holy Name, in Jesus, and in Him alone honoured, whereby shall come that purgation of them at the last, mentioned in all the Prophets, (Isa. lxvi. 17; Zech. xiii. 8, 9; Ps. c. 11.) But in the article of their utmost need, when the power of the enemy shall swell up, even to the brim; when the sorrows of death shall compass her about, and the floods of ungodly men shall make her afraid; then shall He bow the heavens and come down, and He shall send down His arrows and scatter them; He shall shoot out His lightnings, and discomfit them.

Then indeed shall He be manifested in the clouds of heaven; then indeed shall all nations wail because of Him; for He cometh to the earth, as it is written, (Zech xiv. 4,) "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west; . . . . the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Now if all the saints come with Him, then is it necessary that they should already have been all removed, from amongst the living, and from amongst the dead, that with Him they may come.

And this leads me to explain the only thing which remains towards a complete elucidation of this difficulty. It is my opinion, and I almost give it as my belief, that when the sign of the Son of man appears, and these great calamities of war and catastrophes of nations begin their disastrous course, under that banner of the man of war, Christ, being there present and therein acting, though as yet not apparent, His saints will be there along with Him; for He is now ruling the earth with the rod of iron, and breaking the nations in pieces as a potter's sherd, (Ps. ii.) In which act of judgment upon the apostate kings and judges of the earth, He expressly and in the same terms promiseth, that every one who overcometh shall have a part, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the

end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star," (Rev. ii. 26–29.) And in the 19th chapter, where this same breaking of the confederate kings is set forth, He comes attended with the armies which were in heaven. And the same truth, that the saints shall judge the earth, is taught in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, and by the Apostles. Now, if these things be so, it follows of necessity that His saints, who are in their graves, and who are on the earth, must revive; the former by the first resurrection, and the latter by the change from corruptible to incorruptible flesh, which answereth to the first resurrection, (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 15:) that is to say, the first resurrection, and the change of the living saints take place before the infalling of the judgments upon the nations, and before the time when the sign of the Son of man appeareth in the heavens. And seeing that this will take place before any of the stupendous events which are, as it were, done in the presence of Christ and His Church, manifesting their power out of the cloudy pillar, or whatever His sign may be, it will come without premonition or warning of any kind, and therefore may be well likened to a thief coming in the night; as it is, Rev. xvi. 15, before the outpouring of the seventh vial, which is the vial of the judgments.

And so those who are looking for Christ shall be taken to Himself from the judgments to come. They shall meet Him in the clouds, where He is in His sign, and there shall they be with Him in the clouds, ruling the nations with a rod of iron, and breaking them to pieces like a potter's vessel. And so the shutting up of Noah in the ark by God's hand, and the taking of Lot out of Sodom by the angel's hand before he could bring any judgment, and the deliverance of the Church out of Jerusalem, shall all have their proper antitype in the deliverance of those who sigh and who cry against the abominations of the earth, and their removal unto the Lord, who shall confer with them as he did with Abraham of old before bringing the judgment, and by their means shall execute the judgment as it is written in the 149th Psalm: "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing upon their beds. Let the praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishment upon the people. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron: to execute the judgment written. This honour hath all his saints." Now if this removal from the midst of the judgments be the thing which we have to look for; if the first resurrection, and the changing of the

living saints be thus to take place before the great stream of visible judgment comes rolling on; then how watchful we should be night and day, morning watch, noon, and even-tide, to keep our garments, lest we walk naked, and they see our shame; lest we who have been preaching the advent of Christ be left behind amongst the foolish virgins, when our more faithful sisters are admitted to the marriage supper. O my soul, be watchful! O my brethren, be watchful! O my flock, be watchful! O my mother Church, be watchful! O all ye Churches, be watchful! Watch ye all, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man, (Luke xxi. 36.)

It is remarkable, and well worthy of notice, that both these utterances of the glory and the advent express their own fulness and completeness, their own certainty and sufficiency, by a solemn Amen; and this last declaration concerning His advent, by a reiterated confirmation, Yea, amen; a form of confirmation not often found in holy Scripture, and indeed once only that we know of, and that in this book,—and, which is still more remarkable, when speaking of the same subject of the advent, Rev. xxii. 20: "Surely, I come quickly. Amen: yea, come, Lord Jesus." This doth clearly indicate a certainty, a soul-satisfiedness and delight, to have been in the apostle's mind whenever he touched the theme of the second advent. To me it is a very sublime thing to see the Amen and the Yea, amen, following each its burst of ravished feeling, as if each time the apostle had emptied out his soul in utterance, and satisfied his soul in devotion; and, having nothing to add, sealed up the sum with the solemn Amen, and Yea, amen. Oh, to these believers a doxology was a going forth of the whole soul in praise, and an aspiration for the advent was a going out of the whole soul in hope, and the exhausted and satisfied spirit breathed over it the final Amen.

With respect to the next verse, which, according to the common arrangement, I have taken in as part of John's preface or superscription to the visions which follow, I have felt at a loss to determine whether it should so stand or be considered as a part of the first vision, the commencement of it spoken by the Lord, who appeared as the Son of man, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks; and, upon the whole, I am rather inclined to prefer the latter connexion. It seems to me that the seer, having brought his preface to a close with that solemn invocation of the Lord to come, and being thereby lifted up into a very sublime mood of spirit, doth, without remembering the circumstances of time and place, recal the kindred mood of sublimity to which the trumpet voice did exalt him when he

heard it utter these words sublime: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Then, recovering himself, as it were, from the transports of his mind, or being recalled thence by the necessary demand that came upon him to describe the voice and person which he heard, he remembers that he ought first to describe his own place and condition and circumstances at the time of the revelation. Attracted always to his Lord, and withdrawn from the thoughts of himself; ever seeing the divine before the human, the supernatural before the natural, he is caught away to the remembrance of his Lord's description of Himself; and, having delivered himself of this, he falleth back to the less noble yet necessary mention of his own conditions. According to this notion, the 8th verse will stand at the head of the first vision as its sublime commencement—the glorious prelude, as it were, of the grand, various, and comprehensive piece which is to follow. This view is the more confirmed, if we adopt the text of Griesbach, who makes no hesitation in rejecting these words of the 11th verse, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and—;" for, upon the supposition that his judgment is correct, there would, in a manner, be a necessity for considering the 8th verse as the opening of the vision, for otherwise there would be no description or explanation of the person seen in the vision. If the first clause of verse 11 is to go out of the text, then verse 8 must be regarded as the opening of the vision, and verses 9 and 10 as a note of explanation introduced by the way. Nevertheless, though I incline to this arrangement of the context, I have included the 8th verse in the subject of my present lecture, because it consists entirely of names of Christ, which is the proper subject of this lecture, which I shall conclude with a full explanation of the mystery of Christ contained in these words: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

What is rendered in our version Alpha and Omega is, in the original, no more than the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. These letters were used for counting as well as for writing, and, on this account, Christ's calling of himself the Alpha and the Omega hath been by most interpreters supposed to signify merely the beginning and the ending, or the first and the last. And by such interpreters, the second appellation, beginning and ending, is considered as the explanation of the first. To this interpretation I have no objection, so far as it goes; but I rather incline to believe that more is contained in the two appellations than that the one should be a mere explanation of the other. A is the first letter of the

alphabet, and Ω is the last, which contain between them all the signs whereby speech of God or man is recorded. When Christ, therefore, saith, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," He seems to me to claim to Himself to be the whole recorded Word of God—to be that which is written of—to be the whole truth, which hath been and is capable of being uttered by human speech, or expressed by letters, the symbols of speech. While I give this enlargement to the usual interpretation of this symbol, I do not deny the other, which, I am well aware, was become a kind of proverbial expression with the rabbis, who, when expressing from the beginning to the ending, were wont to say, from *Aleph* to *Tau*. But still, as letters can only, by a secondary application, be the symbols of number, being in their primary application the symbols of speech, I think it the more worthy interpretation to suppose that Christ here meaneth that he was the substance of all intelligence, which all speech doth communicate. Letters are the symbols of speech, and speech is the form of the intelligent mind, wherefore Christ doth here appropriate to Himself the bounds of all reason, claiming to be the Lord of the invisible creation, its sustenance, and its life; just as, in the next title, "The Beginning and the Ending," he claimeth to be Lord and life of the visible, material creation. Word is to reason what form and succession is to matter. The pure reason subsisteth not under the condition of space and time. It hath its form, and its only form, in speech, which, again, is an intelligible form only to the reason of another reasonable creature. Therefore it is that Christ is called the Logos, or the Word of God, because Word is the only full expression of a spiritual being, and the only way of communicating with other spiritual beings. Oh what a dignity there is in the faculty of speech! It is the indubitable stamp of God, that the creature who hath it, is formed in His own image. And what a Godlike power it is, to communicate our thoughts by speech! It is the continual evidence, both of the necessity and the manner of revelation. The beings who communicate with one another by speech or word, must themselves be communicated with likewise by speech or word from God their Creator. Their noble faculty of understanding speech or word were otherwise unoccupied by God. If He hath made a world for sight of infinite forms and hues; if He hath made a world for the ear of various sounds and melodies, capable of sweet harmony; and if He hath made a world for taste, and smell, and feeling; should He not make a world of words for that nobler faculty of man which distinguisheth him from the other animals, the faculty of understanding speech? Yea, verily: and therefore it is that perhaps the highest and noblest title of the second person in the Godhead, is the Word; that is, the

communication between the Father of Spirits, and the spirits which He hath made,—the Word not for the sense, but for the reason, in which God may be beheld. Such is the dignity, as I conceive, of the title or name of Christ now before us: and whoever reflecteth upon it thus, will see in it a glorious dignity, and a large comprehensiveness, which is not in that which follows. Word is wider than the world. Word is not the record of the events in their order, not of things in their various appearances. Our Scottish sceptic, Hume, had a poor, beggarly idea of books—as indeed he had of everything else—when he said, that, saving those which treated of histories and recorded facts of nature, a wise man would do well to burn the rest. Poor matter-of-fact materialist that thou wast! books are for the record not of outward things, but of man's inward thoughts both upon what is visible and what is invisible. Even thy histories of facts are not stamps of the material thing, but judgments of the reason concerning it. All science, truly so called, is the chaos of facts ordered and informed with relations by the *lumen siccum*, the *pure light* of reason; and of poetry, and of law, and of religion; and, in one word, of reason itself, what store of books most precious have been written, and are ever writing, by the generous pens of worthy men! With what a numerous progeny hath reason replenished the world, which have their subsistence only in the words of written books! In so far forth as truth is expressed therein, Christ is the author, Christ is the substance of them all. Wherefore He is called *the Truth*, in one place; and in another place, *the Word;* and in the place before us, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*.

The second title which the Lord taketh to Himself, is expressed in these sublime words: "I am the Beginning and the Ending." This title contemplates things visible and material; creation, as distinguished from reason, which is not a creature of God's hand, but the inspiration of His mouth. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Of the things created by God in the space of six days, Christ saith, "I am the Beginning and the Ending." This doctrine, that Christ is the beginning and the ending of creation, implies much more in it than that He created all things, and that they were created for Him; as it is written: "All things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things," (Col. i. 16.) The doctrine taught by this passage in the Colossians is a very important doctrine, though little understood in these barren times; bearing that Christ—not as eternal Son, or bare Word, and yet at the same time not in the human nature, which had no existence until it was generated of the virgin, but still as Christ—created all things. Now what meaneth this? It meaneth, that crea-

tion was an act done by the Godhead, in the fore-view or purpose of bringing into the world the Word in a creature form. The Word subsisting in hypostatical union with the creature, is the Christ: and when it is said that all things were made by the Christ, it must either be meant that anterior to creation the Word was hypostatically united to human nature; which opinion many heretics, and many who have the reputation of orthodox (for example, Watts) maintained; or it must mean that Godhead, in creation, did constitute all things with a view to the Christ, who in the fulness of time was to become the head, the supporter, and the eternal life of all things. Or, in other words, that Godhead in the person of the Son assumed to itself a form; not a created form, but a form of purpose in the fulness of time to be created; out of which form, as the conforming womb, the creatures took their mould and consistency. Creation was not a work constructed for appearances, but for realities, and all realities lie bosomed in God. In that primordial form, in the unity of that First-begotten of the creatures, in the *pleroma* or fulness of that Wisdom which was His delight before He set His compass on the face of the deep, God beheld the certainty, the variety, the diversity, and the final stability of all the creatures which He was about to make. In the idea of the Christ which the Godhead purposed within Himself before the world was, all things were seen and are seen by God, and shall be at length accomplished, and for ever set up, when the kingdom shall be given up to the Father, who thenceforward shall behold the glorious and divine idea realised by the laborious work of the Son effecting all the Father's will through the operation of the Holy Ghost. This, now, is the idea taught in the 1st chapter of the Colossians concerning the creation in Christ, and in the 1st chapter of the Ephesians concerning the election in Christ; and it is the only true doctrine concerning Christ; and it is the only doctrine which representeth a purpose or design in God: which design nothing hath marred, neither fall, nor wicked spirits, nor wicked men; and which design nothing shall ever mar; but against the dispensation of the fulness of the time all things shall be headed up in Christ, "things in heaven, and things on earth."—But the doctrine taught in the title of Christ now under consideration, "I am the Beginning and the Ending," is, it seems to me, something different from the doctrine exhibited above, of His being the first born of every creature, and answers more nearly to that contained in these words of the same chapter of the Colossians: "And by him all things consist;" signifying not merely that He is the beginning of creation, as the architect and archetype thereof, and that He is the end or object for which all was created, and in which all shall be

realised infallible and unchangeable; but signifying, moreover, that all included between these two, the archetypal idea, and the perfect accomplishment, to wit, the continual subsistence, the various laws, the revolutions of ages, and the changes and vicissitudes of daily occurrence; everything which lives and moves, and hath its being, from the grain of sand through all the forms of animate and inanimate substance, up to the masterpiece of God's handiwork, the body of man; all things without exception have their form of being and their mode of operating, not from accident, and still less from any playfulness of creation, but from a fixed and well-ordered intention of showing forth the knowledge of the mystery of Christ. "The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork, day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge concerning him." Concerning whom? Concerning Christ. Our popular theology saith, concerning God; but I say, God is not otherwise known than in Christ. Christ is that deep device of Godhead's wisdom, wherein Godhead shall make itself intelligible to creation, shall show itself reconciled to creation, shall bring holiness out of creation, shall uphold creation; and yet shall not be mingled with creation, shall be, by chasm impassable, separated from creation, and so be ever worshipped by creation, as without, besides, and beyond itself. The theology which represents an intelligible God elsewhere than in Christ, is not a Christian theology, and will invariably produce the one or the other of these effects: unitarianism in faith, or destruction of worship. But this is a point of such vast importance, and so little understood by ministers of the gospel, and by the members of the Church, that I feel well pleased in an opportunity of opening it yet more fully, which presents itself in the very next title which our Lord appropriates unto Himself.

"Saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."—I find this general character, and, I think, failing to prevail amongst orthodox commentators and divines, that they are more desirous to make good the point of Christ's divinity out of these titles, than to expound the matter which these titles reveal to the knowledge and consolation of the Church. This indicates, as it seems to me, a timorous sensitiveness upon that first principle of the faith which it is neither good to encourage in one's-self, nor in the Church. To me, it is as essential that Christ be God, as that God be God, both one substance, equal in power and glory: the one Godhead existing in union with and for the benefit of the creature; the other Godhead existing in and for itself, far beyond and above the faculties of any creature. If Christ be not God, God is to me as dark as "Erebus and old night." If Christ be not God, I, a Christian,

am as ignorant of, as far from God, as the South Sea savage, or the North American Indian. To me, therefore, thus at rest and embosomed in the divinity of Christ, it is the continual desire in meditating the Scriptures and unfolding them to others, not to catch here and there a text in proof of His divinity; but here and there and everywhere to see the divinity, the one Godhead, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, coming into intelligence, into feeling, into action of mine; in one word, coming into sphere of human being. My desire and prayer is, that I, a being of flesh, should understand God, who was manifest in flesh; for it is my eternal life to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. A feverish disputatious man hath turned the eye of suspicion towards me, as if underneath subtle and deep discourse, I savoured of Socinian predilection. The man is either crazed or malicious, or of that class whom Paul designates unlearned and unstable. I am pursuing the only course to overthrow Socinianism, Deism, and Atheism, by exhibiting in Christ Jesus the infinite and absolute perfections of Godhead, embracing with the arms of love, and sustaining with the right arm of strength, and perfecting with glorious beauty, not only reason, the palace of creation, but likewise all creation's meaner chambers. Words these, purposes these, all unintelligible to thee, thou defamer of honest men, and to those who follow after thee in thy defamatory courses. But, to return from this defence of our method to the fulfilment of it:—

It is a thing worthy of remark, that the Lord should take to Himself this title, which containeth the most absolute style of expressing the absolute Godhead. And seeing this title occurs no where but in the Revelations, and that, of those two verses included in the subject of our lecture, the one before us is spoken by the Lord Himself, and the other by the apostle; and seeing, moreover, that the apostle's language in his introduction is entirely derived, as we have seen, from the style of his visions, we naturally infer that the disciple learned from his master, and that he used the style "which is, and which was, and which is to come," and applied it to the Father, because Christ had used it of, and applied it to, Himself. John took the style of the seven Spirits from the Apocalypse, (iv. 5;) He took the style of the faithful Witness from the Apocalypse, (iii. 14;) He took the style of First-begotten from the dead from the Apocalypse, (i. 18, and ii. 8;) and He took the style, the Prince of the kings of the earth from the Apocalypse, (xi. 15, xvii. 14;) and doubtless the only other part of the style of Godhead which he useth, he took also from the Apocalypse, (iv. 8,) and from the passage before us, where, and where alone, it is found written in all the Scriptures. This is an important remark, showing us that hereby is Christ known

to be very God; not because the names of very God are taken and applied to Him, but, which is far stronger, that the names applied to Him are the names taken and given to God. That the name of a greater should be taken and used of a lesser, is the use and wont of language, because the greater includeth the lesser; but that the names and attributes of a lesser should be taken for the definition of a greater, is a contradiction in terms, and hath no place in the forms of logic. Moreover, this practice, of which we have an instance before us, of transferring the name of Christ to the Father, is and must be the universal rule: A name which man can comprehend, must be the name of a comprehensible being; but God, in the person of the Father, is essentially incomprehensible, and therefore no such name can, in the first instance, be applicable to Him, but must be applicable to the Godhead in its manifestation, that is to Christ. The Old Testament names of Jehovah, Elohim, Adonai, &c. are names of Him who was to come, of Him who was to be manifested in the flesh; which names being likewise appropriated to Him who is the object of all worship, the invisible and incomprehensible God, whom Christ worshippeth as God; it cometh to pass, that we clearly discern that Christ, though a creature as to one part of His subsistence, is very God as to another part of His subsistence; nay more, is the intelligible form of God, without whom God is unknown, inscrutable, without comfort, without application, without advantage to the creature. O my soul, rejoice to know that there is a God, by knowing that Jesus Christ is God. Rejoice, O my soul, to know, what God is for thee, for all that is dear to thee, by knowing how Jesus Christ carried Himself to thee, to all that is dear to thee.

This name of Christ, "Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty," we have already explained as it applies to the absolute and incomprehensible Godhead of the Father; but as it applies to the Son, subsisting in the Christ, it admits of a still further and more distinct explanation. Nearly the same form of expression occurs in Heb. xiii. 8: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And in Psalm cii. 25–27, concluding with these words: "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." These expressions are commonly applied to the person of the Son, as a co-eternal, co-essential Person of the Godhead; but this is nothing more than to assert His absolute Divinity, whereas, these, and other texts, are given not for this purpose alone, but for opening and unfolding the intelligible form of the Godhead which subsisteth in the Christ. If, as I have argued above, Godhead is unintelligible, save as it is seen and understood in the subsistence of Christ, the great object which an interpreter should have in view is not to find

the absolute and unintelligible in Christ, but to explain the limited and intelligible subsistence which He hath taken. This fond propensity to identify Christ with the absolute Godhead, instead of showing the absolute Godhead revealed in Christ hath brought over the Church an impatience of all exposition concerning the mysteries of Godhead revealed in Christ; so that upon whatever point of Christ's person you discourse, you are continually stopped with the alarm of meddling with things too high for human comprehension, and there is raised a loud murmur against entering into the only questions which can inform us with the knowledge or the love of God. Oft as I have said it in this lecture, I say it again, that if the subsistence of Christ is not studied, God is not known, and not being known, can neither be loved, nor yet obeyed. My chief, I had almost said exclusive, object, therefore, in this exposition is, to study Christ that I may know God; and what I know, believe and love; and what I know not, worship and adore. Now, in applying this title to the Father, I showed that it was the best fitted to express that absolute being who calleth Himself Jehovah, I am that I am; and whom the Apostle James designates "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning." In applying it to the person of the Son, considered not merely as God, but as subsisting in the Christ, I see many things contained in it:—"Which is," or literally, The Existing One. This is the same form of expression which is used John i. 18, which, literally rendered, is as follows: "God no one any how (or at any time) hath seen. The only begotten Son, He existing within (or inside) the bosom of the Father, that one hath (led Him out) educed Him." I think it is also the same attribute of being which is expressed in these words, (John viii. 58): "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." These expressions I consider to be used of Him as the Christ, and to be parallel with those other expressions, First-born of every creature, Beginning of the creation of God; telling out to us this vast and mighty truth, that before the worlds the Godhead had a purpose filling His bosom, so to speak, that is to say, including all actions, creations, and generations whatsoever which ever out of God shall come, and that this all-continent purpose is itself contained in the Christ, or really *is* the Christ, of whom are all things, and in whom are all things, before they are produced into being. He is the unity of things existent, which are but the pieces that compose the Mosaic of His one subsistence. In the bosom of the Father He subsisted as the Christ, long before He was produced as such. Creation brought into being the rude substances of His visible person; the word of God, in the mouth of the

prophets, brought the rude and imperfect forms of His invisible person. All word and work of God anterior to His birth of the Virgin, and His better birth from the dead, were but the germinations and buddings of that perfect Christ, who shall yet head up into Himself all things which be in the heavens and on the earth. The utterance various of God's mouth, the creation diversified of God's hand, do tell nothing of God directly, but first they tell of Christ, who is the basis of their being; and He it is who tells of God. He hath from the beginning a predestinated form in the purpose of God. He is always the same, He is always the *pleroma*, the fulness of the Godhead in the body. The name, therefore, or rather the first letter of the name before us—to wit, *which Is*, or the Existing One,—seems to me to deny that there is any thing or being existent in itself, or of itself, but all existent in Him, and for Him. And that the devil and his angels, and wicked men, however they go about to deny and to oppose it, have still their being from Him, and the support of their being in Him. In grand demonstration of which, He will raise the bodies of the wicked from their graves, and by an act of His judgment and power, fix for ever the condition of wicked angels and wicked men in the unchangeable state of the second death. And unto all creatures whatsoever He will give their deathless standing; and so doing, will establish the great truth of our text, that He, and He only, is; that all other beings have from Him their being, and by Him in being are preserved. And herein lieth the importance of death, as an ordinance of God; in that the being of every creature is thereby arrested, negatived, held in suspension, proved impotent, its subsistence broken: its future subsistence made to rest only in a word of Christ's, that when He comes He will restore, re-constitute, and for ever confirm, in what manner it pleaseth Him, the being of every creature. God saith of Christ, He only is; the creature saith of itself, I also am, death ariseth on the instant of the utterance of this lie, and saith thou art not; and thus by death every creature is proved a liar, and by resurrection Christ only is proved true.

Next, by the expression "Which Was," or literally "The Was," this seems to me to be revealed concerning Christ; that not only is He the present being, but likewise the past being of every creature. If the former letter or syllable of His name, the Existing One, be understood of the instant now present, then the next syllable, "the Was," is to be understood of all time past; and "the Coming One," of all time to come, through the endless ages of eternity: and then it will be exactly parallel with the expression, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." If, again, the expression, the

existing One, be understood, as I rather incline to take it, of all time since existence out of God began, that is, since creation, then the expression "the was" must refer to an existence anterior to creation, which existence He had within the bosom of the Father, as containing the whole purpose of the Godhead. And *the Coming One* will refer to that complete and perfect manifestation of Himself when He shall come again. I care not which of these interpretations be adopted, so that the one truth contained in the word be admitted: which truth is this, that Christ is not only the container of Godhead, but likewise the container of all creation. Yet so containing both as not to mingle or confuse them with one another; and this through the distinctness of the two natures, human and divine, in the one person of the Son. This idea, which hath been so often brought before us in this lecture, is the very key of all the mysteries of God; and it is, moreover, the highest consolation of every creature, exhibiting God so very tender and careful, so very loving and kind, as to have cast away no creature, as it were, into the void and empty waste, but to have formed everything according to a plan and purpose, yea, and to have knit and bound all creatures with one another; yea, moreover, to have given them a place in the unity of the constitution of His own Son; yea, to have united them in one person, with the substance of His own Godhead: this, I say, exhibits the Creator as He is, most merciful and gracious to the meanest of His creatures. It shows Him all love, all tenderness, all preservation; and, moreover, it teacheth us that creation and providence and redemption are one thing, one work of God in Jesus Christ. This inclusion, I say, in the constitution of Christ is the high birthright and prerogative of every creature, and to be cast out of it is the eternal misery of the damned. This is the outness so often spoken of in the Scriptures, the outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth: the "without the city, where are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." And when sin hath lost unto the creature this its highest birthright, then it is the work of the Holy Spirit to restore us again thereto, to graft us into Christ, and to unite us with Him for ever and ever. Indeed, the being of the reprobate shall still continue, upheld by Christ, to show forth a part of that fulness which is in him—namely, the endless contrariety which there is between God and sin, and the great and fierce anger which He hath against sin. But this their condition would not be seen as a vindication of holiness, and a punishment of wickedness, unless it could be seen in the way of loss sustained and misery inflicted. Now what is the loss sustained? It is the loss of

that birthright of every creature, which it hath from the bounty of God, of constituting a part of the fulness which is in Christ. And what is the misery entailed? It is the receiving that standing of eternal death, which is considered as the outness, the casting out from the house of Christ. But as the righteous severity of a father would not be seen in the casting of a wicked son out of his house, unless that son had been known to possess originally an equal standing therein; so would not the righteous wrath and indignation of God against the reprobate of his creatures be shown, unless they likewise had possessed an equal standing with every other creature in Christ Jesus in their original creation. And as the ejected son doth not cease to have his being from his father because he is ejected; so neither do the outcasts of hell cease to have their being from Christ because they are ejected. That they should have such a being of misery from such an Author of goodness, is indeed the demonstration of that Good One's hatred of and enmity against sin: and therefore He is the being of all present things, of all past things, and of all things to come; the being whose name is, "Which is, and which was, and which is to come."

Upon the next name, "the Almighty," we have little to say beyond what we have already expressed under the title Lord, and the word "Dominion," contained in the doxology. It signifies All-ruler, and the word "Ruler" is rule of the same kind which is expressed by the word "Dominion;" and it expresses very nearly the same with our word Omnipotence: being nearly the same which is expressed by the Hebrew Elohim, and referring to God as Creator, and Sustainer, and Director, and Governor of creation. When Elijah brought before the children of Israel the question between God and Baal, it is thus, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if Jehovah be Almighty, then follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And when it had been put to the test of answering by fire, the people answered, "Jehovah, he is the Almighty; Jehovah, he is the Almighty.' This same attribute of Godhead I take to be the thing contained in Christ's title "the Almighty," showing that God had committed into His hand the sovereign guidance and direction of all things.

CONCLUSIONS.

Now, forasmuch as the manifestation of God in Christ must stretch as far and wide, and completely cover all that is known of God, it is a most erroneous mode of speech, and subversive of the whole doctrine of Christ's divinity, to speak of a God out of Christ. Inasmuch, indeed, as Christ is one with the creature in His human nature, God

is wholly out of Him; but Christ's human nature is not Christ. Christ consisteth of two distinct natures, in one person united for ever; and therefore to speak of God out of Christ, is to separate the substance of His divine nature from the substance of God, and to bring in, either the doctrine that He is a mere creature, or the doctrine that there be more gods than one. Yet these sensitive declaimers, and most inadequate debaters about the divinity of Christ, will talk most roundly about a God out of Christ. Forasmuch, then, as God's being is dark and inscrutable, otherwise than as it is seen in Christ, let us exercise ourselves a little to read and to know what in Him is given for our knowledge and perusal. In Christ, then, what do we see of Godhead? Three things chiefly concerning us to know: the first, That Godhead dwelleth there in harmony perfect and unbroken, with manhood such as mine. Manhood such as mine, soul reasonable, body mortal and corruptible, he took and so possessed by method of incarnation, as that, though its passions and temptations were one and the same with the passions and temptations of all mankind, it never ceased to be dearly beloved—beloved so dearly as not to be despised in the virgin's womb, nor in the stable of Bethlehem, nor in the sinful world, nor in the corruptible grave. Beloved, I say, above all these, the shameful accidents of our being, it was not despised nor abhorred, but owned, sustained, inhabited, sanctified, glorified, and magnified to the throne of God. After which magnificent demonstration of Godhead's affections towards manhood, shall any man say that there is a portion of Adam's substance which is not well beloved of God? The very angels of heaven will reverence and admire manhood as the object of God's special delight; and it seemeth to me, that they would almost be tempted to adore it did they not see a portion of it cast into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. And notwithstanding this stupendous expression of the Divine favour for mankind, many of those, considering themselves farthest advanced in the truth, dare hardly preach unto the people, that God loves them. This comes of their monstrous figment, their execrable lie, that He took the nature of man unfallen, and avoided the nature of man fallen; that He took some pure and holy portion of our nature, but took not part of the same with the brethren. Out upon such abominable doctrine! anathema maranatha unto an angel from heaven if he dared to preach it. Schoolboys should know better; but it is written of a time of the Church when babes shall rule over them: "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them." Let us beware that that time is not now. I for one believe that it is now.

The second thing taught us by this manifestation of God in Christ, is a lesson concerning the Holiness, as the former was a lesson concerning the Love of God. Of the holiness of God, as of His other attributes, we know nothing otherwise than as it is revealed in Christ. All the rest is an abstraction, and not a being; a form of fallen reason, and not a form of God, shining himself through the perfect reason in Jesus Christ? And what do we see of Godhead's holiness displayed in Jesus Christ? We see Godhead bringing its holiness out of the fallen substance of manhood. God's holy activity is no otherwise seen than in the members of the Man Christ Jesus: in whom do I see a holiness avoiding the fallen creature? Nay, but I see a holiness drawing near to the fallen creature, working in it, and brought out of it. Christ is the Holy One of God. Holiness is summed up in Him. Holiness standeth only in Him. Everything seen, everything known else is unholy; for He chargeth even His angels with folly, and what holiness there is in them is only through sustentation of Christ. The angels that fell not, fell not through sustentation of Him. He was the strength of their holiness. They are holy in Him, as we are holy in Him. And out of what was this well-head of holiness stricken? It was stricken out of earthly fallen manhood. The spring welleth pure as the dew of heaven from the bosom of the earth, so came the holiness of God out of the human nature of Christ. Is holiness then an attribute which avoideth the fallen—which saith, Stand off until thou art reformed? No, verily. How then would the holy God have consorted with fallen flesh, and wedded it to His person, and applied Himself to it to redeem and save it, yea, and glorified it to the right hand of the majesty on high? Holiness in God being known only as it is manifested in the person of our blessed Saviour, I do therefore perceive to be that disposition in Him which condemns not the sinner until it hath first besought him and endeavoured to redeem and sanctify him. Adam had no sooner fallen, and become obnoxious to the judgment of God's holiness, than God himself applied to him with the voice of grace and forgiveness. He had mercy upon him, though He took vengeance upon his deeds; He gave him the promise of a Redeemer before He expelled him from paradise. He showed him grace before He inflicted on him judgment. He gave him a word of prophecy to rest upon before He took from him the fulness of his creation state, and debarred his approach to the paradise of Eden. And thus hath God ever dealt with sinful men; His holiness ever inducing Him to grace and mercy before the coming on of judgment and wrath. He is a King whose nature it ever is to present a pardon and reprieve before the execution of sentence: He ever hath

done so, and so He ever will do. It is an error, therefore, to say that God inclines to punish, and needs something to come between and stem His wrath in its direful purpose of revenge. This is the vulgar error of all nations, that God's holiness is vindictive, and not merciful in the first instance; and it ariseth from the ungrateful and churlish disposition of man's heart to be more observant of the evil than of the good which is continually present and occurrent in the providence of God. Paul, in his discourses with the heathen, continually reminds them of the rain and fruitful seasons by which God kept up the memorial of His goodness to them: and the holy Scripture everywhere teacheth us the goodness of God to the evil as well as to the righteous, to the just as well as to the unjust. His name is, "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." And it is added, "which will not clear the guilty." There is a guilt, indeed, which He will not clear; that is the guilt of living in the bosom of this the remedial world of grace, and living all unthankful and ungodly. Not only are all things created in Christ, but in Him the ages or dispensations are constituted. Everything in creation, everything in providence, preacheth the same gospel-giving God whom Christ preacheth. The prophetic office of Christ and of His Church doth not alter God, but only declare God, and cast light upon His dispensations. So that the nations which have not the gospel, as those which have it, are living under the love and grace of the same God whom Christ makes known, whom Christ doth not make or change in the preaching of Him, but whom He only makes known as He is eternally and unchangeably. This gracious, good, and holy God, is to us seen living and acting in a person; to those who know not that person, or believe not on Him, He is seen and felt in every feature of creation, in every act of Providence, yea, and in a person He is known to every one, and that person is every one's-self. We are created in the image of God, and for that image of Himself written in our conscience God will hold us all responsible. Oh! what infinite errors do I see in the practical and theoretical theology of men, arising all from this one cause of not exalting Christ into the dignity of being the only representative and revealer of God! How much more of practical Socinianism there is, than men dream of! It is the essence of Socinianism to say that there is a God known or knowable out of Christ, beyond the person and the actings of Christ, whether in creation or providence, or in flesh; for it is one subsistence of God in manhood which wrought all things, though His manhood was only predestinative, and not really subsistent until He was generated of the virgin. Into this subject we shall have an opportunity of enter-

ing more at large when we come to treat of another of His names, "The Beginning of the creation of God." Meanwhile we conclude this lecture with observing the third great lesson which comes out of that knowledge of Christ we have brought forward at this time.

The third great doctrine concerning God's being and attributes which we are taught by Christ, is this, That though creation was originally in Christ as a part of the divine purpose with respect to Him, yet through sin it fell into misery, and confusion, and darkness, and death; and therein continued, and doth continue, notwithstanding the Christian providence of God thereto, until Christ himself did join the creature to His own person in hypostatical union, and the Holy Ghost doth gather into union with His creature part the creatures fallen into sin. Then, indeed, when a creature hath been united to Christ's body by the Holy Ghost, it standeth in a blessed and everlasting life. "Except a man be born again, of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and creatures who are not thus united, though they have their being and constitution in Christ, are yet not blessed in Him to the enjoyment of God; but, contrariwise, accursed to the misery of those who would not believe on the Son of God. This lesson divideth itself into several parts, which I have time barely to enumerate. The first of these is, the difference between creation and incarnation. Creation, though a work in Christ, is not such a work as to control the natural nothingness, worthlessness, and sinfulness of the creature; but incarnation is. Incarnation doth control the creature's nothingness and worthlessness—first in the person of the incarnate God, and then in the person of all His members. Incarnation, therefore, is a higher, nobler, and better thing than creation. And wherein now doth Incarnation differ from creation? In this, that it is generation out of that which already existeth, and not mere bringing into existence. We infer, therefore, that in generation out of creatures already existent the great mystery of God is contained; which, indeed, is signified to us in the 2d Psalm, where, when all kings, and magistrates, and judges, and chief creatures of God, are represented as in rebellion against Him, the Son it is, the only begotten of God, who beareth up the pillars of creation, and redeemeth it from its wreck and ruin. "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." I believe, therefore, that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is that for which creation is but as it were the prepared womb: and that hereby shall Christ be known and exhibited as the Father of the eternal age, (Isa. ix. 6.) This mystery of incarnation, as the end of creation, is, I believe, intended to show forth the great truth in Godhead, which is wont to be ex-

pressed by the eternal generation of the Son, and will prove that He is not a creature created, but a Son generated. But of this great head of doctrine we shall come to discourse when we treat of the name "Son of God," which He taketh in writing to the Church in Thyatira. The second part of this lesson is derived from Christ's dying, for which I can see no reason but the faithfulness of God. His person was divine; His becoming man was glorious in the Father's sight; His life in flesh was the very exemplar of God's own holiness: He kept the law; He did more—He made it honourable and glorious: and wherefore then should He die? but because God in Adam had said to every creature of Adam's substance, Thou shalt die. This was the first word of God, and upon it resteth the demonstration of the word's infallibility. Wherefore, to prove that God in Christ manifested is only for the demonstration of God's infallibility and unchangeableness in His eternal and incomprehensible being, Christ, when He became manifested, submits to death; at once the most dishonourable and calamitous condition of a creature; which condition for the Creator to endure is, indeed, the most awfully complete demonstration of the subservience of all creation to the invisible God. When Christ himself, in His person the Son of God, in His subsistence very God and very creature, comprehending, indeed, all the creatures—when Christ, I say, thus containing the fulness of Godhead in a body, Creator of all things, preserver of all things, embodier of all things, doth lay down His life, and pass into the common gulf of being, death, for the honour of God's faithfulness, as He himself saith, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, that the word of God might not be broken; how, oh how, after seeing and knowing this, shall not every creature be content to suffer and to die for the honour of God's most faithful word, and for ever feel that its life as a creature is and ought for ever to be held in simplest dependence upon God, and for His only glory? But wherefore did that word of God proceed, which bowed the Christ himself unto the death? what was the occasion of so terrible a word? Sin, which is the disobedience of God's commandment, the dishonour of God's word. And therefore, while we have in the death of Christ the demonstration of God's unchangeable word, we have therein also the demonstration of sin's most fearful, hideous guilt. Not that Christ's death was an infliction for guilt of His own, but for the guilt of that sin with which He had connected Himself, not as a party, but as a Redeemer. That one transgression of Adam made not only all men to die, but made the Son of God to die when in Adam's nature he came. Not only could not the goodly fabric of creation bear up against one sin, but the Son of God himself, when He became a crea-

ture, when He was manifested in flesh, must also die. Take now these two things together—the hideousness of sin, and the unchangeableness of every word of God—and who will any more doubt concerning the threatened judgment of hell? No: heaven and earth shall pass away, but one tittle shall not pass from the word of God, till all be fulfilled. There is something in the death of Christ passing wonderful, and revealing greatest depths of God. It showeth that man's life as a creature is nothing but a breath, and that everlasting life is from our generation of Christ. Creation is nullified to show forth the superior glory of generation. For in Adam's creation all men descending from Adam by ordinary generation are created; and in him they fell, and their creation-life was cut short. Death had us all when it had Adam in its hold. As creatures, we were all in him set up in life, and in him fell down into death. Therefore I say, creation of man was nullified, in order to make way for the higher work of Godhead, which is generation by the Holy Ghost out of the nullified creation; a mystery which first began in Christ, and is now continuing in His members. And Christ himself, though generated of the Holy Ghost out of creation materials, doth by dying signify more completely than all, how null and void mere creation is rendered by sin until the material substance of it be changed by the Holy Ghost in the grave. Man is the shadow of Christ, who in manhood was predestined to come: and no doubt Adam had the peculiarities of fatherhood and royal priesthood, because Christ was to be acknowledged Father and Royal Priest of all creation—the Prince of life! If man thus created had stood his ground and occupied his place, we know not well what would have been, and are not called upon to speculate. But having fallen from his estate, God's purpose in him was not thwarted, changed, or turned aside, but rather served, advanced, and fulfilled. The worthlessness of the materials out of which the eternal building of glory was to be fabricated was thereby demonstrated. The materials crumbled down into corruption and dust, that the great Architect might show what out of their worthlessness he can construct. Death says, Come what may out of this world, I will show you that the outcome is not from any indwelling powers of its own. Death is, therefore, the great eulogist of God, by being the great defamer of the creatures. I cannot tell how, but it hath occurred to me hundreds of times, when reflecting in this my present mood, as if death were to prove the first verse in the Bible, that all things were created out of nothing. Death is like the tongue with which the creature saith, I am nothing; and when silent death hath preached this sermon, and summed up the long discourse with the death of the Son of God

himself, so far as He was a creature, then the Architect of creation raiseth up the dead Christ, and places Him for the foundation-stone of a regenerate creation, which shall never be made null and void. And of this second temple, whereof the glory surpasseth the former, Christ is not only foundation and corner-stone, but He is the growth, the cement, the substance of it all; and He is the fashioner of its frame, and He is the polisher of its beauty; and the glory of its strength standeth in Him alone. And thus is the second great truth of creation made firm, that all things were created in the Christ and by the Christ. The first truth is, Ye were created out of nothing, and ye are nothing. This they denied; and death came in, and proved them liars, for down to nothing they crumbled amain. Not, indeed, into absolute nothing, for God will not be frustrate by the creature's lie, but into powerless, shapeless dust, into vile unsightly corruption. The second truth was, Ye are all made by Christ, and in Christ. This also did they deny; and to prove it true, when Christ comes He passeth into death, and out of death brings the immortal and eternal life of creatures. This is the great signification, as I take it, of the death and resurrection of Christ. This is the law by which God hath been pleased to bring about His purpose; and it hath oft occurred to me reverently and humbly to inquire into the great end served by this method of God's appointment. And oftimes it hath presented itself to me in this point of view.

The race of man was from the beginning destined to hold dominion. Adam was created king of the round world. Moreover, he was created head and father of all who should inhabit that world; prophet, priest, and king; Christ's vicar on the earth; only pope, that is, only father and vicar of Christ. This kinghood, priesthood, and fatherhood of a world's people is the peculiarity of man's estate as distinguished from that of the invisible spirits, which is the only other form of intelligence that we know of. Now let us keep steadily before us these two properties distinctive of man; and I think they will guide us completely through the purpose of God, and show it to be very simple. By coming into being in this sinful flesh of mine, commercing with this sinful world, which I am destined hereafter to rule as a king and priest, what do I, a regenerated man, learn hereby? I learn this, that instead of ruling the flesh and the outward world, I was not able to keep my ground against them, but was subjected to their bondage, taken captive on every hand, bound down and disgraced by a thousand ignominious desires of the flesh, and of the world, and of the devil; so that I might no more doubt that if I attained to a freeman's place, it was not by any power of mine own, seeing the law of the flesh held me in hopeless thraldom.

This is a good lesson for a future viceroy to learn. If he is not to govern for himself but for another, it is expedient that he should know that the very capacity for government he holdeth from that other. This we, the future kings and priests under Christ, do learn, by knowing that in ourselves we cannot rule a member of our body, nor any outward thing, according to the law of God. Good lesson of our own insignificance is this, and sufficient to take away all boasting, all confidence, all glory in myself. But this is not all. I a regenerate person, do by regeneration of the Holy Ghost learn furthermore that there is One who can redeem my liberty, and hold up my goings according to the law of God, who can put within me a strength to resist and overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, and to reduce these antagonists of God into unwilling service. And from whom have I such liberty, from whom have I such holiness, from whom have I such honour? From Christ: He manumitted me, He made me His freed-man, He changed my filthy vesture of flesh to be a comely apparel for ministering unto God. He hath made me what I am; and the life which I now live, I live by the power of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. This now, methinks, is good training for one who is to serve Him as a viceroy. But this is not all. I, a regenerate man, shall yet be renewed in His very likeness; one with Him, as He is one with the Father: son of His substance, as He is Son of the Father's substance; image of His person, as He is image of the Father's; to Him devoted, as He is devoted unto God: my own nothingness no longer to deny, as Adam did; my own origination from Christ no longer to deny, as Adam did; my own second and subsidiary place no longer to deny, as Adam did. And being so, that I am now in my very being a vicegerent of Christ, I may well be so in mine office also. And so believe I that regenerate men shall be constituted very kings and very priests unto God, shadowing forth in their own persons that fulness of Christ's office, which in Him shadows forth the fulness of Godhead. He, the only intervener between God and the creation; we, the interveners between Him and creation's several spheres. And then, when the race of kings and priests has been completed, I believe they shall be the Adams of their several spheres; containers of a race; peoplers each of a world, whereof they are prophet, priest, and king, for Christ, and through Him for God, who keeps His royal court here, where He made His lowly bed. Here, where He fought the fiery conflict; here, where He won the eternal conquest; here shall He erect the trophy, here rear His palace, here set up His throne, and hence give laws to the multitudinous worlds, which, as they are bound together by one law of matter, shall also

be bound together by one law of morals, which is the eternal, immutable truth of God. And thus, I think, shall the two great mysteries be laid open by human nature, which are the chief mysteries of God—to wit, the origin of the Son from the Father by eternal generation, and the completeness of the Godhead as creation can contain it, all included in the Christ.

N.B.—It hath rejoiced my heart greatly, feeling as I do the liveliest interest in the well-being of the Church of England, to find, since the publication of Lecture I., that there are three or four of her Lessons taken from the Apocalypse: and I do, therefore, hasten to correct the erroneous impression which may have been made upon any of my readers, by what is written at p. 71.

In the writing of these Lectures I have felt my soul at times so stirred with the sublimity of the subject, as to long for other forms of expression than those which are proper to exact and rigid exposition: and though I find it to have been customary with the best of our divines to intersperse their prose with poetical utterances, I rather prefer to keep those emotions of my soul, and present them apart, lest I should lose at any time that perfect control of the mind which is proper to an interpreter of prophecy. I am no poet, and have never studied the laws of poetry; but I do desire devoutly to express those harmonious moods of my spirit, with which God doth visit me, in harmonious numbers.

SONNET I.

The Benediction or Salutation.—(Rev. i. 4, 5.)

FROM Him, which is, and was, and is to come,
God Absolute, whose throne is fixed in heaven;
And from the Holy Ghost, the Spirits seven,
Who of all power and knowledge fills the sum;
From Jesus Christ, great Head of martyrdom,
The faithful Witness, who with death hath striven
And from the prince of death his sceptre riven;
Who of our flesh did purge away the scum,
And rise immortal; crowned Lord of all,
And Head of kingdoms: From those sacred Three
Be grace and peace unto all saints who call
Upon God's name, and love His mercy free.
Ye members of Christ's Church, rise from your fall,
And in Him dwell; in Him God's fulness see.

SONNET II.

The Doxology.—(Rev. i. 5, 6.)

To Him, who, being in the form of God,
Nor robbery thought with Godhead to compare,
Yet stooped low in love our flesh to wear,
And for our sins poured out His precious blood—
Soul-cleansing fountain, in whose living flood
He, great High Priest, doth wash us, and prepare
Us for Himself, a spotless bride, to share
His throne and power, God's love and fatherhood :—
Unto our Brother, Son of God, we give
The glory and dominion of our state :
To Him be praise, in whose prerogative
We reign as kings and priests, who were of late
Satan's bare thralls. But now free men we live,
In faith and hope ; and for His coming wait.

LECTURE III.

CHRIST THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

REV. i. 9-20.

I John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

PART I.—THE VISION.

WE are now come, in the progress of our exposition, to the first of those symbolical visions which were vouchsafed to the Apostle John during his exile on the island of Patmos—whither he had been sent, as is believed, in the time of the Emperor Domitian, "for the word of God, and for the witness of Jesus Christ." In the second verse he doth designate himself as the person who bare re-

cord to (witnessed) the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ; and here he asserts, that for this witness he was on the island of Patmos. It seems to me that, in an age when so many testified and suffered for their testimony, the seer would not have taken this characteristic to himself unless there had been something conspicuous in the place which he occupied amongst the many who witnessed in the same behalf. Now this was the case with the Apostle John, and with no other disciple in those times: for, besides that he wrote the gospel of THE WORD OF GOD, and the epistle of the true witness of Jesus Christ—which, doubtless, contained the sum and substance of his preaching in the churches—he was at that time the only apostle, and perhaps the only survivor of those whom the Lord had familiarly conversed with. As the great head, therefore, of the witnesses, he would be regarded as the great maintainer of the truth against the numerous errors which were abroad. For his zeal and forwardness in this work he incurred the notice and censure of those in power, and was banished to the island of Patmos, where he had this vision; of which Irenæus says, "It is not very long ago that it was seen, being but a little before our time, at the latter end of Domitian's reign." To this, his persecution and suffering for the cause of Christ, he alludes in these words: "Who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." He was their brother and companion in tribulation, inasmuch as he was enduring, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, exile in a lonely island—for Patmos was one of those islands where the Roman emperors used to confine offenders. He was their brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, inasmuch as he endured these afflictions for the hope of that kingdom to come, which he patiently waited for. This expression of their co-fraternity, this badge of their persecuted order, "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," speaks to me volumes, as to that which was considered in those times to be the essence of the gospel. Men speak in these times very much concerning essentials and non-essentials; what then were the essentials of the apostle's day? They were to suffer for the testimony of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and patiently to wait for it. These were the characteristics of a brother and companion in Christ; but in this age of the Church it is the common badge to be silent concerning the kingdom, and not to be in waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ. These have changed place—from being the great essentials, to be the non-essentials of the preaching of a minister and the faith of a believer. But this can never be, that the Church of Christ should change their faith and hope. It is only the world which hath taken the name of the Church; but those of

the true Church will still be found full of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; and for the fulness of that faith they will be doomed, as heretofore, to suffer persecution. Blessed is every one who can say, I am a brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Having thus given the place and condition in which he received the vision, he next giveth us the time: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." This expression, *the Lord's day*, shows us, that by the authority of the apostles—derived, it is likely, from the higher authority of Christ himself, and perhaps communicated during those forty days after His passion in which He spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God—one day had been set apart under the name of the Lord's day: with the peculiar use of which the Christian churches must have been well acquainted, else would it not thus familiarly have been referred to as a note of time. And in confirmation of this, it appears from Acts xx. 7, that it was the custom of the Christians to "come together upon the first day of the week," for certain holy observances. Moreover, Pliny, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, written not many years after the death of the Apostle John, doth declare that it was their custom to meet together on a set day. And Justin Martyr, who wrote within forty years of the same event, declareth, that it was the custom in his time for the churches to assemble on the first day of the week for the same holy occupations which we still observe. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the appointment of the first day of the week, as the day of our Lord's resurrection, to be observed for holy and pious purposes, hath the sanction and authority of the Church from the times of the apostles: and as the Scripture hath no higher authority than the inspiration of the same apostles, and the continual reception of the same Church, we may fairly place the Christian institution of the Lord's day upon the same high authority.—If, now, any one inquire, why the observation of the Jewish Sabbath ceased? We answer, it ceased with the other ordinances of the law, when the substance of these shadows was come in Christ. And if it be asked, what the substance of the Sabbath is? I answer, the sabbatism of the millennial rest which remaineth for the people of God. This we hold by faith; into this we are baptized. By our baptism the interval is overleaped; we are supposed to be already risen, and living a super-resurrection or millennial life. A Christian, therefore, inasmuch as he liveth not by sight, but by faith; inasmuch as his fleshly body is put to death, and his spiritual body raised with Christ; is regarded by God as keeping a sabbath. The distinction in time between holy and unholy, as in meats and everything else, has been done

away, and his work and his rest are equally holy, being done in faith: so that for him to keep the Jewish Sabbath were indeed to dishonour the liberty of Christ, and to introduce a distinction of time, which sanctifieth a part at the expense of desecrating the other part. The same evil effect will be produced if we connect the Jewish idea of consecration with the Lord's day: it will desecrate the other six, as if they were not days of the life of faith as well as the first. It resteth for its authority upon apostolical sanction, and the traditionary approbation of the Church; and for its uses, it hath the same high sanction. And believing, as I do, in the Holy Catholic Church, I receive its traditions as authoritative, when they do not contradict any declaration of holy Scripture; which we know is inspired by the Holy Ghost; and, therefore, whatever is contrary thereto cannot claim for itself the same weight, for the Holy Ghost is nothing contrary to itself.

On the Lord's day, then, when it is to be believed that the apostle's mind was elevated with the remembrance of the glorious resurrection of the Lord, which sealed the certainty of our resurrection to an inheritance of rest; on this day, which carries the hope of a Christian continually forward to the millennial rest, when every creature of God will enjoy the long expected Sabbath; the holy seer —dwelling apart, haply, in some solitude of Patmos, or in some dungeon immured—was visited with this glorious succession of visions, some on earth, and some in heaven; whose overpowering splendour that he might endure, whose great variety that he might faithfully remember and record, whose various places of representation that he might be transported to, he is first transformed into that condition or mode of human existence which is called being "in the Spirit." What this is, I take it, we must feel, in order either to understand or to describe it. It was that state into which Ezekiel was brought, (Ezek. ii. 2; iii. 24,) in order to fit him for his visions and revelations of the Lord. And here, again, I remark the similarity between Ezekiel and John; for I do not remember any other of the prophets of whom this is affirmed. It is the state, also, in which Paul seems to have been when he had visions and revelations of the Lord, and "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (or possible) for a man to utter." And this state he describes to have been such a state of ecstasy, or rapture, as to have deprived him of the encumbrance, and almost of the consciousness, of a body; for twice over doth he say, "whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth." Whatever it was, it was no doubt necessary for the sustaining of that communion to which they were called; not for im-

pression's sake, but for utility's sake, to enable them to know and to record the things which Christ wished through them to communicate to the Church. If I might venture an idea of my own upon this subject, it would be, that in all these instances, and in that of Philip, who was translated from place to place, and in every other instance in holy Scripture recorded, we have no more than properties portrayed of that spiritual body which we shall receive in the resurrection; and which shall be capable of bearing us about from place to place, and of sustaining all communion of sight and intelligence which it pleaseth the eternal Godhead through Christ to reveal to mortals. So that, as the things revealed concern the future condition of the raised saints, so the circumstances of receiving them doth foreshow the powers of that resurrection-body, of that living being, which we shall then enjoy. In one word, what the transfiguration was to Christ's future being and glory, a foretaste and an instance of it, such were those spiritual states and conditions to the saints who enjoyed them.

Being thus prepared for receiving and sustaining the divine communications, John heard behind him "a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." And with sublime announcement came, in the same trumpet voice, this solemn command, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." This announcement and command were made as with the voice of a trumpet; but the voice with which he afterwards spoke is said to be "as the sound of many waters." In like manner, when the seer was transported to heaven, he was summoned thither by a voice "which was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with" him. So, also, when the Lord broke silence from the top of Sinai it was with the "voice of the trumpet, exceeding loud, so that all the people trembled;" and when at length the silence of the tomb shall be broken at the advent of Christ, it shall be with "the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: for the trumpet shall sound." And when the service of the temple opened in the morning, it was with the sound of the trumpet: then the great door was opened, and the service proceeded. So, likewise, when the year of jubilee commenced, it was ushered in with the sounding of the silver trumpet. The people were mustered in their camp by the sound of the trumpet; and thus also were alarms given to the host. The trumpet, therefore, is well used in this vision, both as breaking the silence of the Church, and calling

it to still higher revelations; and likewise as introducing our Lord in the character of High Priest, which we shall find He assumeth to Himself in this vision. With respect to the style in which He announceth Himself, we have nothing to add to the large exposition which we gave of it in our last lecture, where we delivered it as our judgment, that the eighth verse was the proper announcement of Him who speaks with the trumpet voice; and that the first clause of the eleventh verse, if it be a part of the original text, is only a repetition for the connexion's sake. Most likely it was introduced by some transcriber, and may have been first inserted in the margin, to show the continuity which had been interrupted by the ninth verse, and afterwards drawn into the text itself. But as our object is to use the authorised text and version both, though we take the advantage of whatever light hath been cast upon either by critics and commentators, we would now take up the exposition of the name, "the First and the Last," did it not occur in another part of our text, (verse 17,) and in a connexion which gives it still more interest; and, therefore, without adding anything in this place to what hath been said in Lecture II. upon the style of the annunciation, we come to the injunction laid upon the apostle, "What thou seest write in a book."

The whole Apocalypse is here expressed by the word "what thou seest;" which confirmeth me the more in my interpretation of the second verse, as referring, not to this book at all, but to the former writings of the apostle; identifying him with John the apostle, and nullifying the vague and unfounded speculations which have been gone into, to mystify the authority of the book, by casting doubts upon the person of its author. This injunction to write what he was about to see in a book, and send it to the churches, doth stamp the matter of this prophecy with an importance beyond that of any other portion of Scripture. In this provision, that no part of it should be lost, there is not only a security that no part of it would be suffered to be lost, but there is also an exquisite value given to every jot and tittle of what was seen. And what a commendation of it to the churches, that by special injunction of Christ the seer should be commanded to write it fairly out, and for security's sake, send it, not to one, but to seven Christian churches! Why these seven churches should have been chosen, in preference to all others then existing, we can see no other reason than that which is mentioned in our former lectures: to wit, that they were found in such various conditions as to afford excellent instances for the counsel, reproof, consolation, and other attributes and functions of the common Bishop: so that, when He should have given His charge to each, that seven-

fold charge should present a complete charge to all the ministers of all the churches in all time to come, and contain a complete body of principles and rules for the regulation of the Church, and a complete picture of our Bishop's care, and a full and sufficient warning of our various temptations, as also a complete exhibition of the manner in which we must be delivered out of them. Much have I thought upon the various theories which have been given of these seven churches, as if they were symbolical of seven successive states of the Christian Church, or as if they represented seven integrant portions of the Christian Church. But all such hypotheses I have come to reject, not as erroneous in their principle, but limited in the application of the principle. Universality and completeness is doubtless the mystery of the number seven, whether applied to churches, or to spirits, or to seals, or to trumpets, or to vials; and when applied to the Church, it is beyond a doubt the universal Church, that is intended. So far from objecting to this symbolical use of the number seven, upon which these hypotheses are founded, I object to the hypotheses because they do not fully express the symbol. If succession, indeed, had been a part of the vision, there might have been a ground for laying out that succession in seven parts; but from this we are expressly prevented, by having given to it the completest unity in respect to time which can be given; by its being made the time present, the *now* of the Apocalypse; and containing the things which *are*, in contradistinction from the rest of the book, which contains the things which must be *hereafter*, (i. 19; iv. 1.) It is an universality, therefore, also in respect of time; which is not to be obtained by a succession, but by a universal present, a *now*, extended over all the duration of the Church. A specialty of application it had, no doubt, to those seven churches, as every prophecy hath to some event therein predicted: but as no prophecy is thereby made of any private interpretation, so these seven epistles are not the less universally applicable because they are specially appropriate. Moreover, though they have a special application in time, as we shall show beyond question, to the season of the persecutions of the Church under paganism, which preceded the exaltation of Christianity to become a national institution in the days of Constantine; yet are they not by that specialty of application in respect of time the less to be used as the great document of our Bishop's mind unto all His churches in all times, till He shall come again. It is the Bishop's charge to His one Church, in many several places subsisting, and of many several members composed. Such is our idea of this vision, which we shall have occasion to explain more fully as we proceed.

After this introductory annunciation of Himself and charge unto His minister, we have the person of Christ exhibited to us in such a guise as in all points to befit the character in which He appeareth and acteth. The form, and figure, and features, which He assumes at the head of each vision, are not for sublime effect, but for much information and exact teaching assumed. Whether as a robed Priest, with various peculiar and striking additions to His person, as in this vision; whether as a Lamb slain, yet living still, as in the next vision, (chapter vi.;) whether as the mighty Angel with the golden censer ministering the prayers of saints, and shedding down fire on the earth; or as the Angel clothed with the rainbow coming to take possession; or as the Word of God riding forth from heaven against His enemies; or in whatever other form or figure Jesus is represented in this book, it is always chosen with divine discernment, and adapted with divine wisdom to the part which He hath to perform, to the revelation of Himself which He is about to make. Most necessary it is, therefore, with the greatest pains to examine and to decipher the complex figure which is presented in the verses that now come under exposition; in doing which there is neither need for great ingenuity, nor yet for great learning, but simply for good sense, with large knowledge and honest faith in Scripture. Here, then, is the description of that scene which the apostle beheld when He had turned round to see by whom that majestic voice was uttered with a trumpet note: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." . . . "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."

Sublime and appalling as such a sight must have been, it was not assumed, as hath been said, either for sublime or terrific effect, but for fully and completely expressing the nature of that office which He was about to discharge in dictating these epistles to the churches. What that character is, we have now to learn, by perusing point by

point the sight which is so carefully described to us in these verses. And first let us look at it as a whole, and then consider it in parts.—As a whole, the vision exhibiteth one person, and three distinct objects—which are, the seven candlesticks, the seven stars, and the sharp sword going out of His mouth. And of these objects we have an express interpretation given to the first two, verse 20: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches." And of the third, the sharp two-edged sword, if we have not in this book so explicit an interpretation, we can yet gather it beyond a question from various parts of Scripture: for we may lay it down, that whatever symbol or mystery in these visions is not explained by a direct interpretation, is so treated, not that it might be left in the dark, or, as they say, for time to explain it; but because it needed no explanation, but might well enough be gathered from a general knowledge of Scripture language. I am convinced in my own mind that an interpreter of the Apocalypse needs little or no apparatus of hieroglyphical or symbolical learning, but simply a sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures in the original tongues, and a thorough acquaintance with the prophecies of the Old and the New Testament, and, above all, with that part of the Word of God which standeth in forms and times and seasons and figures, such as the Mosaic economy, with the institutions of the Jewish state. But as for any knowledge derived from sources other than the Scriptures—such as the use of hieroglyphics in the picture-writing of the East—I give little authority to it; believing that Scripture is the only interpreter of Scripture; and that there is a unity of language, as well as a unity of subject, from the beginning to the end of the volume. Now, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, iv. 12, it is written: "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" and in the Epistle to the church of Pergamos, which needed the wholesome excision of discipline, it is said, Rev. ii. 16, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against thee with the sword of my mouth." And in the vision of victory, where he comes forth by his name The Word of God, "a sharp sword goeth out of his mouth, with which he smiteth the nations." There can be no doubt, therefore, that the sword proceeding out of the mouth signifies the word of His power, with which he will slay the wicked; as it is written, Isaiah xi. 4, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." It signifies the word as a word of judgment, and not as a word of mercy. The symbol of a sharp two-edged sword cannot, without the utmost violence, be applied to the word of grace and consolation, but to the word of wrath and in-

dignation. This is put beyond a doubt by the use which is made of that sword in the last verse of the nineteenth chapter of this book: "The remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." Taking, then, this for the interpretation of the sword, and recalling the interpretation of the candlesticks and the stars, what have we in that group of objects of which the first vision is composed? We have the Son of man standing in the midst of His churches, holding in His right hand the ministers of His churches, and speaking from His mouth words which shall pierce unto the quick, and divide asunder between soul and spirit, between joints and marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Here, now, are three distinct ideas: first, The idea of episcopacy, oversight, or supervision, suggested by the person of the Son of man standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks; secondly, The idea of preservation and action, suggested by His holding the stars in His right hand, the seat of safety and the instrument of power; and thirdly, The idea of pruning discipline, and even entire rooting out, expressed by the sword with two edges proceeding out of His mouth.

This much, then, we gather from the general and combined aspect of that which the apostle saw; to wit, that it represents Christ in the midst of the churches, watching over them as a good Shepherd, as their great Head and Bishop; and serving Himself herein with the instrumentality of their angels or ministers, whom He holdeth in His right hand; threatening also severity, and having the intention and the means, if need be, of utter destruction. It is most worthy of observation that in this symbol of the Church universal, with all its ministers, (for so much have we seen imported in the number seven,) there is only one Person—the person of the Son of man—and all the rest are symbolised by things. It is not, as in the next vision, where the Church is represented by the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures; for here the ministers are symbolised by stars, and the churches by candlesticks. They are, as it were, but adjuncts of His one person, circumstances for setting forth His pastoral office. He is the one life, the only liver, in the whole. Both ministers and people are but earthen vessels, in which He putteth the glory of His great name. We rise into the dignity of persons only in virtue of our conjunction with Him. We are but the materials of His one body. From looking, therefore, at the vision as one thing, we gather that it is the vision of Jesus Christ, the universal and only Bishop of His Church, and intended to show forth the use He makes of us the ministers, and the care He takes of you the people. Let us now take up the objects in order, and consider them apart.

The first thing which the seer beheld was the candlesticks: "And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; which (saith the interpretation) are seven churches." In all languages truth and knowledge are likened to light; and that by which truth is propagated or sustained is frequently called the lamp of truth—the torch of truth. In the Old Testament such expressions as the following are frequent to characterise the word of God: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The Psalmist prays that God would "light his candle within him." These floating expressions of likeness were stamped with divine authority, and combined into a symbol, at the institution of the Mosaical economy which prefigured the good things to come with Christ: for, while the inmost place of the sanctuary which was not yet open, and only entered once a year, in promise that it should be opened, was lighted with the light of the glory of God, which shone forth from between the cherubim, the holy place into which the priests did continually minister was lighted by a lamp or candlestick consisting of six branches, whereof each contained a light, with a seventh in the centre. This candlestick was fed with oil of a consecrated kind, and trimmed by holy hands; and, as hath been said, it stood in the holy place whither none but priests might enter; and it was an emblem of the Church which then was, as the seven candlesticks in our text is an emblem of the many Christian churches which now are. In the holy place there was, besides, the table of shew-bread, of which the priests alone might eat. This was the symbol of our Lord's offered body, upon which the royal priesthood of His Church are supported. The candlestick was also the symbol of the Church; His body the fulness of the wisdom of God, giving light unto the world; as it is written, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but *on a candlestick*, and it giveth light to all that are in the house." Christ saith of Himself, "I am the light of the world: he that believeth in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Church, therefore, of enlightened men holding forth Christ's light in the midst of darkness, is the true antitype of the candlestick which stood in the holy place. In the former dispensation the unity of the Church stood in the Jewish nation, restricted to place, and under conditions of time, and standing in the entireness and uniformity of various ceremonies and circumstances; therefore the lamp was of one piece —one lamp; whereas, under the Christian dispensation, where the unity of the Church standeth not in the conditions of time, place, and circumstance, but in the oneness of the sustaining Head and quickening Spirit, the symbol is not one candlestick, but seven

candlesticks; having a separateness in appearance, but a unity in the one High Priest, or Bishop, the Son of man, who walketh in the midst of them. Yet though the candlestick, under the former dispensation, was one, it had seven burning lights; one in the centre, and six upon the branches, to signify, as I take it, that out of the Jewish stem was to come forth a sevenfold or universal light, (according to the power of number seven, set forth in the two former lectures;) and as the one candlestick of the tabernacle, with its seven burning lights, did signify the one Jewish Church limited to place and to nation, so the seven candlesticks, now watched over by the true High Priest, do signify the same Church with its partition-wall broken down, its handwriting of ordinances destroyed, the veil of its temple rent in twain, in order that it might embrace all nations, and all countries, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. In one word, I consider the candlestick to signify the Catholic Church, made up of many parts; the one body of Christ, made up of many members, and these members gathered into several individual churches: so that this symbol of the seven candlesticks doth not express mere unity, but a unity made up of several individuals, which are not persons, but churches; and the truth taught is, that the Catholic Church under Christ was to consist of several distinct churches, which yet should be one in faith and in spirit, though different in place, in time, and in circumstance. When, therefore, you hear from the mouths of men affecting much purity and zeal such expressions as these, "I know no Church of England, nor of Scotland, but only one Church of Christ," you do so far forth hear a confession of their ignorance; for we are taught that Christ's Church was to subsist in several individual churches. I do not say how much malice and contempt of authority may be contained under this speech, which I so often hear; but this I know, that it contains a direct disavowal or entire ignorance of the thing conveyed by this symbol of seven distinct candlesticks.

It is a mean interpretation of this grand symbol of the seven golden candlesticks, to limit its application to those seven churches of Asia then existent: whereas the substance of the epistles is, as we shall see, altogether universal as to persons and as to time; ranging onward through all time, until He come who shall proclaim that time shall be no more, and His eternal kingdom begun. But, while this limitation of the symbol to the then condition of the seven Asiatic churches is narrow and mean, it is perfectly true so far as it goes, seeing they were true specimens of Christian churches, and did actually exhibit those varieties of condition to which Christian churches should be liable, standing also in need of those instructions which

they received, and actually sustaining those judgments that were threatened, or actually receiving those promises which were held out and therefore forming the basis of fact, which verifies and authenti' cates all the lessons taught. So that to apply the lessons to these churches is altogether right, but to limit them thereto is altogether wrong. Yet this is nothing so much to be blamed as is the method of those who would throw the matter of fact altogether out of the question, and hunt for allegorical interpretations of the seven names, and then endeavour to substantiate these allegories by finding seven successive conditions of the Church answerable thereto; which is, not only to let in first the refinements and subtilties of the fancy, and next, the accommodations of the ingenuity of man, but likewise to destroy the very character of the prophecy, which, unless it rest upon some basis of fact then present, or coming into being, doth altogether lose the nature of certain prophecy, and pass into the nature of a mystery or morality. But the true view, of which these two are the disjointed parts, consisteth in regarding all that is said of these seven churches as most veritable matters of fact upon which the great High Priest of our profession, the universal Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, doth build a superstructure of commendation, counsel, reproof, instruction, promise, doctrine, discipline, and laws, unto His universal Church, in all times subsisting, until the number of the elect shall be accomplished, and His kingdom shall be come.

If, now, any one inquire into that which constitutes the individuality of a Church, I seek my answer in the consideration of the seven churches before us, of which one was in Ephesus, the metropolis of proconsular Asia; another in Smyrna, a city of great celebrity both then and now; another in Pergamos, the metropolis of Mysia, and the seat of the Attalian king; another in Sardis, the renowned capital of Crœsus, and the Lydian king; another in Philadelphia, a city still abiding in considerable dignity; and the last in Laodicea, of which the ruins testify its former grandeur, and God's severity upon its impenitence. These seven churches therefore, being all constituted in different cities of the same Roman kingdom, (for all Asia within the Euphrates had become a Roman province a full century before this time,) have their distinctness, not from diversity of civil government or kingdoms, but simply from diversity of place; for it is not to be believed that at this early time there had crept in any diversity of doctrine, or discipline, or government, or forms of worship. Mere diversity of place, therefore, doth constitute the individuality of a Church. The language is, the Church *in* Ephesus, the Church *in* Smyrna, &c. It is also to be observed, that the saints in each of these cities are considered as constituting one Church.

Over these churches there was one person who presided in the word and the doctrine, and likewise in the discipline, to whom is given the name Angel; and what was his proper dignity and preferment above the rest of the Church, doth best appear from considering the responsible style in which he is addressed by the universal bishop in the epistles themselves. No mention is made in these epistles of the elders of the churches, though we know from the charge given to them, in Acts xx., by St Paul, that there were several in the Church of Ephesus; and we know from the charges given to Timothy and Titus, that there ought to be several in every Church, and therefore we are sure there were several in every one of those churches here addressed. Forasmuch, then, as there was one angel or minister of the word in those several churches whom the Lord regards as the responsible person, we conclude that in order to the being of a Church in any place, there must of necessity be a minister of the word to constitute it by word and sacrament. And seeing that the offices of elder and deacon are not here mentioned, we ought to conclude that theirs is a dignity emanating from the former, and seen, as it were, represented therein. As the mayor of a corporation doth represent the whole members and office-bearers thereof in the presence of the king, so the angels of the churches are looked upon as representing the whole established government of that Church, and is spoken to by Christ in that capacity. We are not, however, to suppose that He was the only responsible office-bearer in the Church, the only delegate of the great Head, because He is the only one mentioned; for this would be to contradict the known fact with respect to the Church of Ephesus, and the known ordinance with respect to all the churches, that they were furnished with both elders and deacons. But this much we may distinctly conclude from the fact of the angel being the only person mentioned, that without such an office-bearer no body of Christians can be spoken to as a Church, and likewise that from Him as the Head the authority of the elders and deacons is derived; or, in other words, that to Him it appertains to ordain or set them in their stations. They are not necessary to the existence of a Church, but they are good for its right government; whereas an angel or minister of the word and the sealing ordinances is necessary to the existence of a Church in any place.

Moreover, where a Church in any place became more numerous than that they could assemble under the preaching of one ministry, or sit down together at one communion table, and it became necessary to divide it into several parts for the ends of worship and communion, then no elder might, as an elder, or presbyter, or priest, take upon himself to minister word or sacraments to such divisions

of the flock upon the pain of excommunication to himself and all that should adhere to him: so sacred by the apostolical canons, and indeed all the primitive canons of the Church, was the distinction between a minister of the word and sacraments, and an elder, presbyter, or bishop, and overseer of the flock. Nor was it competent to any minister of the word and sacraments to delegate that duty to any one who was not thereto set apart in the same manner as he himself had been. The selection of a person to take upon himself the ministry of the word, rested with those who already possessed that gift and office. He must be examined and tried of his knowledge and soundness in the faith, and his ability to utter by preaching the mind of Christ Jesus. They must seek for a person whom God had thus endowed, whom His Spirit in the diversity of dispensations had furnished with this gift; and such an one being found and proved by the ministers of the word, might with the assent of the people be set over them by the laying on of hands: and this done, a new Church is thereby constituted, which may indeed acknowledge a certain obligation, and pay a certain deference to the Church from which it came not by schism, but by consent, and for edification; but it may not on any account give up its own integrity as a Church, which now it hath in the dignity of its minister. Then it will become him to ordain elders and deacons from such of the flock as he shall find to possess the gifts appropriate to these offices, and thus from one Church in Ephesus many churches will in the progress of the truth naturally arise. At the time that these epistles were written, this had not come to pass in those seven cities, and therefore one angel is spoken to as presiding over word and doctrine in each. But this is only an accidental circumstance, and not a substantial matter; for if, as I have argued, and shall show more fully when I come to treat of the stars or angels of the churches, the dignity of an angel standeth in the ministry of the word and sacraments, every one who doth administer these hath a dignity, and is spoken to as the head of a Church. And let every one assure himself who reads these words, that if he be ordained to minister the word and sacraments by the Church, he is, in the eye of the Head of the Church, as much His vicegerent over that Church for ecclesiastical affairs, as a king is vicegerent over his kingdom for civil affairs, or as the mayor of a free town is vicegerent for Christ over that community. This is a great point of doctrine, to ascertain what constitutes the individuality of a Church; and therefore I have been at the more pains to ascertain it from the context. The conclusion is, that the Church of Scotland, or the Church of England, hath as many integrant churches as she hath ordained ministers

over appointed flocks. Not according to the number of the presbyteries in the former, or bishoprics in the latter, but according to the number of pulpits for preaching the word, and of communion tables for administering the sacraments. What is the precise place and office of the presbytery or prelate, is another question, which is not before us. But there ariseth the inquiry, And how is the unity of these several individual churches to be maintained? For, as we have argued, the mystery of the number seven is not manifoldness merely, but manifoldness in unity. To have shown therefore what constitutes the individuality of a Church, is only to have unfolded half the mystery, and we now come to speak of the unity of these several parts.

"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and the communion of saints," is one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and occupies the very next place therein to the articles of the faith of the blessed Trinity; and deservedly so. It standeth before the forgiveness of sins, which, in these selfish days, hath come to absorb almost the whole creed. The Catholic Church is the universal Church; universal as respecteth time, place, and persons; and to have added locality, as the Romanists do, is to express a contradiction in terms. They say Roman Catholic Church: inasmuch as it is Roman, it is not catholic; inasmuch as it is catholic, it is not Roman. The Catholic Church is not the saints on earth only, but likewise the saints in glory; and not these two divisions only, but also the saints that are to be; who are one in the Father's purpose of election, one in the membership of Christ's body, one in the enjoyment of the Holy Ghost, one in the first resurrection, and one in the occupation of the throne of Christ. To this one Catholic Universal Church these epistles are addressed; and instead of being addressed to one as the mother, and the rest as the children, they are addressed to all the seven co-ordinate and co-equal. There is, indeed, a mother in the Apocalypse; but it is the mother of harlots, Babylon the Great, that great city which ruleth over the kings of the earth; and no such city is, or ever hath been, save old Rome, since the days that the apostle wrote. No; the Christian churches here addressed are co-ordinate and co-equal; and their unity standeth not in the metropolitan usurpation of one, and the provincial diminution of the rest, but it standeth in the unity of the common head. These seven candlesticks had no unity in themselves; seen alone, they would have been seven distinct objects; but with Christ in the midst of them, they have a unity as His charge, and His possession. And because His episcopal charge and lordly possession includeth all churches, we know that in these seven all are contained. If, then, there be such a

vice-regal dignity in the angel of a Church, as we have argued in the above remarks, and such a separate independent standing co-equal and co-ordinate in his parish, diocese, or congregation, how shall the unity be preserved without sacrificing the separate completeness of each Church within itself? This is the great question, which we would now endeavour to bring to a conclusion. It cannot, as we have already shown, be in the way of inclusion; for then the distinctness and co-equality would be swallowed up. If not in the way of inclusion, as the mystery of iniquity falsifieth, then must it be by confederation under the common head. Two communities acknowledging one head, to whom they are in all things obedient, cannot be separated amongst themselves. In spite of diversity of place, and diversity of tongue, and all other diversities, they will come, under the same formative principle of life, to feel and to maintain a unity with one another; a unity, though not a uniformity. That mother of harlots would have uniformity of language, uniformity of dress, uniformity of rite and ceremony. And the same craving for uniformity wrought havoc first in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and next in the Episcopal Church of England, at the hands of one another, and hath left them in an unfriendly and unbrotherly attitude to one another. Uniformity of appearance, or even of gift, is not of the essence of unity. The one formative life of the body doth not show itself in making all the members uniform in shape, or in use, but, contrariwise, all diverse; and this diversity it is which shows the unity of the life. The life is proved not to be in the hand, by finding that it is also in the foot; not to be in the eye, by finding that it is also in the ear. But if the life exhibited itself always in one form, and in one use, then should I be led to suppose that the life lay in this visible form and particular use. And accordingly where uniformity is absolutely insisted on, the life is lost in the form, the spirit in the letter. Not, therefore, I argue, in uniformity will the unity show itself, but rather in a diversity, all tending to the observance and obedience of the same head. Therefore hath it been ever held by the soundest and wisest divines, that forms and ceremonies may, and ought to change, without changing the substance of obedience, or introducing schism into the Church. Any number, therefore, of churches acknowledging the common headship of Christ, will approach more and more near unto a unity of doctrine, government, and discipline, without any outward striving after uniformity of rites and ceremonies. When questions arise, as in the Church of Antioch, they will submit them to the ministers and elders of the churches round, who meeting together in their co-ordinate and co-equal capacities, will take measures to remedy the evil. When the churches are deprived of their ministers, they

will seek to the ministers around in whom is the gift to find one who may stand in the room of him whom they have lost. And thus by degrees out of the necessary wants of the churches, if they be regarded as co-ordinate and co-equal, must Presbyterian confederation arise.

But this is not an accidental or conventional arrangement, but necessary to the existence of the churches. For there being one minister of the word in each, possessed of that dignity which I have explained above, who shall be the judges of one fit to occupy the same room, but those who are conscious of the gift within themselves, and accustomed to know its manifestations. Without a continual confederation therefore of the ministers seeking out men in whom the Holy Ghost is, and appointing such to make probation of their gifts amongst the churches, it is clear that the churches would soon be found without ministers. And whether I look at the primitive Church, or, farther down the stream, at the discipline of the Culdees, or at the foundations of our colleges and universities, I see this work, of seeking for gifted and called persons, to have been a principal object with the governors of the Church. Moreover, whatever may be said of the right of the people to call their minister, and I am inclined to regard this as essential, still it belongs to those who are already in possession of the gift and calling, to discern in whom that gift is found, and to set him solemnly apart by the laying on of hands, when he hath received his call. It is a thing, therefore, not only natural, but even necessary to the continuance of the Church, that there should be confederations of the ministers for ministerial purposes, and as in the council of Jerusalem for questions concerning discipline, that elders should be conjoined with them in this common cause. This presbytery may appoint over itself a permanent superintendent, or choose him for the occasion as their president, or proceed in any other way which they may judge best for the management of the matters in hand. But such a superintendent doth not thereby subordinate to himself in any way the other ministers of the word, whose indefeasible right to represent Christ standeth in his ministry of the word and sacraments, which are the symbols of his vicegerency. Yet did this superintendent or moderator early attain to himself the dignity of metropolitan, which at length issued in the assumption of the Papacy. When thus presbyteries are formed with their permanent or movable moderator, it is not necessary nor to be desired that in everything they should seek or practise uniformity; and I believe if they give themselves to the Lord in this matter, he will not work amongst them uniformity, but accommodate each to the condition of the place where it is seated, making it able and vigilant to meet the form of temptation which besetteth the people there, and

conforming it to that mode of discipline which may best serve the ends of God's special dealings with the Church in that particular province. The spirit of uniformity I regard as the greatest antagonist to the spirit of unity. Uniformity is unity turned into an idol.

So far indeed do I carry this principle of unity as perceived in diversity, that with all the existing differences between the Churches of Scotland and England, I can maintain in my heart, and do maintain an unity of love and brotherhood without losing one jot of my Presbyterian preferences; and the same can I say of every reformed Church as constituted in their standards, amongst whom when any great vital question ariseth, the means of preserving the unity is by a general synod or œcumenical council. The council of Trent hath put the Roman Church out of the pale of Christendom. He that acknowledgeth that council, let him be Anathema Maranatha. But churches which acknowledge it not, though not Protestant, however far gone in corruption, I can still look upon with brotherly regards; but those which adhere to the most damnable decrees of that council, I utterly reject from the communion of the Christian Church; ay, and until they shall have purged themselves from that abomination.

But still this matter is not yet told out. What I have said concerning the preservation of unity, applies only to the preservation of unity in place. I have shown the natural methods by which the churches will come to work together as one through their observance and dependence on the one common Head: but the Catholic Church is not merely the Church in all places subsisting at one time, but in all places, subsisting in all times, generations, and ages, from the former to the latter coming of the Lord; and therefore it is of necessity that there should be a provision for preserving the unity of the Church against the separation of times, generations, and ages, a provision to connect generation with generation, as well as to connect Church with Church. And this is provided by means of regular succession in the ministers, who are the constituent heads of a congregation. By regular succession, I mean ordination from the hands of those who already possess the prerogative of ministering the word and the ordinances. These in the persons of the apostles had the dignity from Christ. And they transmitted it to others, and so it passed downward with a continual recognition of the principle in the Church, that the right could not be derived from any other source but those who already possessed it. At the Reformation, this principle was a little shaken in the Church of Scotland; but it soon recovered itself, and was fully recognised in the Second Book of Discipline, which is the more perfect form of our government. There is

a question, in whom the right of ordination lies; whether in those ministers called diocesan bishops and prelates, or in the parish priests and ministers of the word. This question, our former remarks on this vision have, I think, set at rest. If the dignity of an angel standeth in the ministry of the word and ordinances, then he who actually hath this function is, and must be, the judge of him who ought to have it. And accordingly in the Church of England the parish priest layeth on his hand in ordination along with the bishop; and, I maintain, is co-equal in that act with the bishop, who hath it only in right of his being a minister of the word and the sacraments. In our Church, through all ages thereof, excepting only the two centuries in which we proved the dark oppression of the Papacy, the act of ordination was in no diocesan bishop, but in those who ministered the word and sacraments, and who formed the little Culdee College or Presbytery of the neighbourhood. They set a man over any particular flock, or sent him out on any particular mission, by the laying on of hands. And from the first times of the Church it was so. Ordination never stood in one person, but in two or three: and I hold that the characteristic of that person in whom it stood was the preaching of the word and the ministration of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is not Church-of-Scotland doctrine; I hold it to be the doctrine of the Catholic Church, of Scripture, and of reason itself. Ordination, therefore, at the hands of those who already possess the office of ministers, is that which continues the unity of the Church against the disadvantages of time, as mutual confederation is that which maintains it against the disadvantages of place, by what ministers this act should be done is not material to the essence of it, so that there be two or three. But it hath always been deemed by the Church convenient, that it should be by the ministers of the bounds, with the consent of, at least without any objections from, the ministers of the province. The Church hath always looked upon this as a thing which should not be done in a corner, but with great publicity, and likewise with great deliberation; for it is the life-continuing act of the Church, in which should be embodied everything symbolical of and necessary for unity. The unity in place is preserved by its being done by the ministers of the Presbytery; in the Church of England, by the bishop and his priests; but if there were any hindrance to other ministers taking a part, then the unity of the Church in place would not be preserved, and therefore this is carefully avoided. All ministers of the word present, may, and ought to lay their hands upon the head of him whom they would ordain. This union of their right hands signifieth the oneness of the rulers of the Church. Their want of a single

head signifieth that the great Head is still invisible, and will continue so all the days of the Church, until the kingdom. Their uniting without a visible head to instal another, commonly one of another generation, over the flock, signifies the unity of the Church in time. The union of the people to call one whom the ministry thus searcheth into and fixeth over them, doth signify both the unity of the members and their subjection to their rulers. But, besides all this, there is a thing still wanting, which is the acknowledgment of the gift to the Holy Ghost; namely, that the qualification dependeth not on the calling of the people, nor yet upon the approbation of the ministry and their authorising of him, but reacheth higher and acknowledgeth the invisible work of Christ, the Head, by the invisible Spirit. Now this, which is most necessary to prevent the whole of the apparatus of the Church from becoming a great idol, is beautifully provided for, not only by the questions put to the person before ordination, but by this invariable rule of our Church, that anterior to the act of ordination, years perhaps, certainly months, the person ordained shall have been tried, as to his gifts of preaching, and, after satisfactory evidence of his having the gift, been licensed to preach the gospel, as a probationer amongst the churches, unto the end that if any Church, void of a minister, should feel satisfied of his fitness to edify them, they may call him to be their pastor, as one in whom the gift hath been found by the presbytery: and he, as one gifted of God, and who hath found favour of the people, may now receive the presbytery's sanction, to minister word and ordinance, and represent the great Head over that community of his members; and by this means it seems to me that in the great radical matter of continuing the ministers, our Church hath been well directed of God, for which I desire to render Him humble thanks.

Now let no one think, because in laying out these great ideas I exemplify them in that Church with whose constitutions I am best acquainted, that I do this in a spirit of bigotry, or of schism; nor have I any object in view of making proselytes; nor have I any object in view of justifying the most noble reformation of Scotland from the abuse which hath been cast upon it by many dignified men, nor have I any covert object whatsoever. As an honest man, I am honestly interpreting the visions of the Apocalypse, and having now before me the grand symbol of the seven golden candlesticks, representing the unity in number of the Christian Church, it was absolutely necessary that I should unfold this much agitated question of the Church's unity: and how should I unfold it, but in my character of a churchman, whereof I am not ashamed; in my character of a minister of the Church of Scotland, whereof I am proud? To every

man I owe love, to every member of Christ's Church pastoral care, to every minister of Christ's Church I owe true brotherhood; and honour, above that with which I honour myself. This spirit may my God enable me ever to preserve, and especially in these days of irreverence and insubordination; which evil spirit, as I have much rebuked, so would I fain preserve myself a witness against it, and an example of the opposite spirit of love and subordination. Having now acquitted myself of this difficult task, than which I anticipate none more so in the course of our expositions, I have one remark further to make upon the symbol itself, of Christ standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

By the raiment of the High Priest, with which the Son of man is here invested, as well as the candlesticks, it is proved that the vision is not of things within the veil of the heavens, but of things without the veil; that is, of things in this visible world; and therefore, most surely, the churches and the ministers of the churches, should look to these three chapters of Holy Writ, as containing the form, order, and stability of their constitutions until Christ shall come again. In the next vision, on the other hand, Christ as the Lamb slain, is represented within the veil of the heavens; and forasmuch as that vision headeth up the rest of the Apocalypse, until the time that the New Jerusalem descendeth out of heaven, we may see, as I think, in this distinction that He is nearer to His churches, being in the midst of them, than He is to the nations of the earth, whom He affecteth in various ways from within the veil by opening the seals of that seven-sealed book;—in other words, that He is nearer to us, as the Head of His Church, than He is to the world, as the Head of Providence. He hath us, as it were, in, beside Him, within the holy place; but them He removeth Himself from, by retiring into the most holy place. And when He doth come forth in the vision of trumpets to do His judgments upon them, He takes His stand at the altar, outside of the temple altogether; and from thence He scatters fire amongst the nations, "the Gentiles, who trod the altar, and the holy city under foot," (Rev. xi.) Here, then, is the beautiful arrangement: Himself in the most holy place of the heavens within the veil; we who are His true churches, in the holy place of the golden candlestick; the Gentile, or Apostate Church, without, treading down the holy city, for forty-and-two months; after which they begin to be destroyed, and the earth to be delivered from its destroyers. To go further into this at present would be to anticipate what belongs to a future lecture.

So much have we to say upon the symbol of the seven golden candlesticks, from which we now pass to the subject of the vision,

"the Son of man;" for the revelation of whom all these visions are given, and whose dignity as the Head of the Church is set forth in the vision before us. He, the Person, and the only person in the scene presented to the seer, is described with a minuteness which bespeaks a purpose, even the purpose of conveying by every contrivance of attire, and of aspect; of word, and of act; the full information of His character, as Bishop of the churches.

"And I saw in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man." This expression carries us directly to the visions of Daniel, the first which he received; and being considered in an historical point of view, the most important perhaps in the whole canon of Scripture. It is the vision contained in the seventh chapter of that prophet, which may be entitled The Vision of the Son of man, and of His kingdom, with all His saints; in which vision, the oppression of the saints, and of the earth, their future kingdom, is set forth by the similitude of four beasts which in succession spoil the world, whose wicked times being ceased and determined, it is said, (ver. 13,) "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven." "And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him." And it is added, "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."—This same title, the Son of man, is given to Messiah in two other parts of the Old Testament, (Ps. viii. and lxxx.,) and in both cases with reference to His dominion and the dominion of His saints. But the allusion is evidently to this seventh of Daniel, from the expression *like* the Son of man. He took to Himself the title of Son of man during the days of His flesh, and in some places rests much doctrine upon that name; as, for example, in the fifth chapter of John's Gospel, where, after speaking of Himself as the Word of God, and the Father's great representative, to whom the Father hath given to do everything for Him, He addeth these words, (ver. 26:) "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because he is the Son of man.*" And accordingly when He cometh to gather His elect from their graves, and to judge the quick, it is always in this character, the Son of man, (Matt. xxiv. 30; xxv. 31.) And here also in our text, when exhibiting Him as Head of the Church, it is in the same character as Son of man. Why this continual thrusting forward of His humanity? I would ask. The answer is, that it is the dominion.

of the man which it is the purpose of God to exhibit. It is the ultimate fact, and as it were the one constituting principle of creation, that man was to govern it, and show forth to it that image of God in which he was created. Government of the creatures is not an accident of manhood, which passed from him at the fall, to be for ever lost; but it is the essence of his being, the object of his creation, which Adam lost, only that the second Adam, the true Head of mankind, might regain it, and, in regaining it, show forth the depths of the grace and love of God. This is the reason why, as Son of man, He effecteth every work of the redemption of the creatures. His body of manhood, presented holy on the cross, redeemed us from the guilt of sin. By that offered body, we are nourished, fed upon His flesh and blood; by God in manhood, death's potentate was destroyed. He took flesh to do it, (Heb. ii.) By God in manhood, we shall be raised from the grave. By God in manhood, the Church is governed now: by God in manhood, the Church shall be brought into her dominion hereafter. Reason this matter out as you may or can, the matter is a matter of fact, written in the Word of God, and needeth no confirmation from our reasoning, nor from our reasoning can derive any detriment. And when I say that the object of man's creation was, to reveal God to the creatures in a likeness, and in that representative likeness to govern them all; which object for a while deferred by our fall, yet not hindered thereby, but rather prospered, Christ doth substantiate in His own person, and is substantiating in the Church, and shall finally substantiate in the kingdom;—when I have said this, I have said all that I can say upon the subject; yea, and all that can be said; for what more is there in putting forth creation, than to communicate God's own being to the knowledge thereof, and to govern it according to God's own blessed and most harmonious law. By the fact, therefore, that Christ taketh to Himself, as Head of the Church, the title of the Son of man, we learn, that the Church is the preparation of the kingdom, and that He who is to possess the earth is the same who now feedeth His flock like a shepherd. And we are taught, moreover, that God acteth towards His Church not otherwise than through the manhood of Christ; that between us and Godhead, the man Christ Jesus, doth in all things mediate and intercede; that the Father hath committted all things to the Son of man, hath vested His glory in the Son of man, and in Him, and by Him, who is our brother, is instructing, leading, and guiding us; that the Holy Ghost cometh not to us in the plenitude of Godhead, whose fellowship Godhead only can sustain, but cometh to us all humanised, so to speak, proper to man's conditions, accommodated to man's frailties,

and fitted to re-establish manhood's likeness unto Godhead in every feature;—in one word, cometh to us, through the veil of the manhood of Christ, as life floweth to the unborn child through the veins of its mother. This mystery of the Holy Ghost's subjection unto the man is little understood, and little cared for, in these times, which are too busy with printing and circulating Bibles, to think of interpreting them. But they are the glory of the Spirit of God, and the glory of the Christ, and the glory of the Father, and explain the ineffable grace which together they have shown unto manhood. Oh, what a grace of Godhead to His creatures thus to apprehend its fallen, mortal, corruptible substance; and by personal union therewith, to exalt it to be the mouth, the hand, the every instrument of Godhead, for doing every work of goodness and blessedness unto creation. What a work of the Son, thus to condescend! what a work of the Father, thus to do by the condescending Son! what a work of the Spirit, to become the servant of the servant! and what an honour of the Father, by the Son, and by the Spirit, thus for ever to serve His glory! Oh, my soul, be filled with this glorious mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, working out their own glory in creation and redemption! Let thy delight be to know God, and to speak of Him, and to serve Him. This, this, is thy salvation, to know thy God. This, this, is thy blessedness, to see thy God in Jesus Christ; and seeing Him, to see thine own great archetype. This, this, is thy sanctification, to look into that face of perfect beauty and purity, and by beholding to be transferred into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of God. Oh, if again, as I fear, this doctrine of the Trinity should be consigned to a tacit oblivion, and thrown, as it were, into a corner of the Church's ruin, then I ask of my God the highest honour of contending against such an obscuration, such an oblivion. And if, again, it should be resisted in the Church, I ask no higher degree than to contend for it with the patience with which the saints and fathers of the third and fourth centuries did contend.

Before passing from this title, "like the Son of man," I have another observation upon the import of the word *like*. Why, in Daniel, and in the passage before us, should He be called "like the Son of man." For the same reason that, in Phil. ii., He is said to be in the "likeness of man;" and, in Rom. viii., in the "likeness of sinful flesh;" and, in Heb. ii., "in all respects made like to the brethren;" to wit, because His proper being is Godhead, His proper person Son of God; which being, which person He laid not, neither can lay, aside, though He did assume into the fellowship thereof, the being of a fallible and fallen creature, to the end He might raise that

creature into the state of infallibility. Therefore is it said, that He was "like unto the Son of man;" and made in the likeness of men, to the end we might be taught that there was a higher being in Him than that perfect manhood in which He appeared, acted, and shall for ever subsist. He was the Word made flesh, the God made manifest in flesh: He was the Son of God revealed as the Son of man. But this form which He assumed in the fulness of the times was not an appearance or a similitude, but the reality and substance of manhood. We have seen that, so far from being an accident, it was the very end of creation, that God should be made manifest to creation, and for ever revealed to creation in a creature form: and the form selected was that afterwards assumed,—to wit, the form of man. There is not a notion so full of evil—of all heresies it is the most fatal, both to God and creation—as to put forth that the Son of God's taking upon Him human nature, was only for the particular and private end of redeeming fallen men,—that it was merely a phenomenon in Godhead's ever busy administration, that it was only one act of which many such may succeed, or may have gone before, in creation's history. I say that this is the fellest conclusion and foulest error which can be promulgated, equally subversive of God's glory, and creation's well-being. And the truth is, that all things were created in the Christ, and by the Christ, before the Son of God had really become the Christ; creation being the foretelling and foreshowing of the great purpose of God, to assume a creature form. The Christ was to come into subsistence, not by creation, but by generation, out of a fallen creation, in order to show that the Son is eternally generated, and not created; so likewise, in order to show that creation is an act of God, far short of generation; and that it is only through the knowledge and in the strength of the generated Son, that creation recovers from the poison of sin, and the corruption of the grave. If, therefore, I be asked how He was in the likeness of men, I answer, in all respects, according to the declaration of the apostle, (Heb. ii.) I answer, even unto our sinfulness; so far as that is our condition, and not our act. Yea, it is the essence of the mystery that he should take the creation under the disguise, the deformity and the weakness, and the sorrow, and the enmity of sin, in order that He might prove truly its salvation, its life, its beauty, and its stability. To those who set these things at nought, or deny them, I say stoutly, and fearlessly, ye are setting at nought the truth and the glory of God; and the sooner ye are warned of the peril thereof, the better it may prove to your immortal souls. So much for the name which He takes to Himself in this vision; and now we come to the raiment with which it hath pleased the Divine

Wisdom to invest Him, for the fuller manifestation of His person and office.

"He was clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." Both these pieces of raiment were proper to the Jewish high priest, and to him only. The first, rendered in our version a garment down to the feet, is one word in the original (ποδηρη) formed from the word signifying the foot, and therefore denoting a garment reaching down to the feet. Now this very word is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament; for the high priest's robe, upon which was suspended the breastplates and the ephod, (Exod. xxviii. 4;) "And these are the garments which they shall make, a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe;" which is thus described in the 31st verse: "And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. . . . And it shall be upon Aaron to minister, and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not." In like manner, in the vision which Zechariah had of Joshua the high priest, chap. iii., he is represented, first, as clothed with filthy garments, upon which it is said in the hearing of Zechariah: "Take away the filthy garments from him. . . . Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment, (in the Greek, with a *Podera*;) and I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head: so they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments." Under this vision it is expressly declared that He is signified whose name is THE BRANCH, (Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12.) And the substance of that vision is, the changing of the high priest's raiment. Jesus, or Joshua, is presented to us, first with filthy garments, and Satan at His right hand resisting Him in the work of building the temple of the Lord; signifying to us, our High Priest once clothed in the likeness of sinful flesh, in order to resist and overcome Satan, who hath the power of death. And it is promised that these filthy garments should be taken away, and a high priest's royal garment (a Podera) given to Him. Accordingly, the first time the Son of man is exhibited to us, after His controversy with Satan, He is clothed with the garment which was promised to Him. He hath the ensign of the high priest; He hath the garment of blue colour of heaven; He hath heavenly humanity, in which He showeth Himself as the great High Priest of His Church. The crowns, indeed, which were promised to Joshua, (Zech. vi. 11,) he hath not yet received in this first of his Apocalyptic revelations; for the time to manifest Him, as a King, is not yet arrived. But when the kings of the earth have been removed from their vice-regal thrones, or rather when He comes by force to dispossess them, when their period

of probation is over, He comes with many crowns upon His head (Rev. xix. 12.) But with those seven eyes, which were upon the foundation-stone of the temple, laid before Joshua, (Zech. iii. 9,) the Lamb which was slain, and whose redeemed flesh is the foundation-stone of His Church, is exhibited in the fifth of the Revelations. I touch these points of similarity between the high priest of Zechariah and the high priest of the Apocalypse, to show their identity, and thereby to exhibit the importance of this feature of the vision, His being clothed with the robe of Aaron. It is no less than the fulfilment of the prophecy in Zech. iii.; as if God had said, "I will clothe thee with the High Priest's robe; vile though thy garments heretofore have been, in thy mortal controversy with the prince of corruption." The second piece of His vesture is likewise proper only to the high priest, "girt about the paps with a golden girdle," whereof the particular description is given in the Book of Exodus, (xxxix. 5,) where, though it be commanded to be made of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, yet was it commonly called the golden girdle, as indeed all the glorious garments of the high priest were called his golden garments. But the girdles of the other priests, and of Aaron also, save when he was gloriously arrayed, were simply of linen, as is laid down in the 28th and 29th chapters of the Book of Exodus. But that girdle of the high priest, which shone with gold and glorious colours, is always distinguished as the girdle, the holy girdle, the curious girdle, of the ephod. And thus the one doth corroborate the other; and both together do put it beyond a doubt, that the Son of man is here attired as the High Priest.

Now if we would know how much of Christ's office is by these symbols pointed out to us, we have only to study the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, throughout, is the exposition of Christ, the great High Priest of our profession. The proper dignity of the high priest stood in this, that he could come into God's invisible presence; and this is the prerogative of Jesus, that of all creatures He alone as a creature standeth in the presence of the Father. And wherefore? Because he only hath a holy being and substance to present unto God, in whose sight nothing unclean can stand. It is a vulgar error, that the separate soul is in that presence of God which was figured by the holy of holies, of which figure the reality is (Heb. ix. 24) declared to be heaven, and the presence of God. If the tabernacle of God were now with men in bliss, what were the meaning of giving this as the characteristic of the time when the harlot Babylon being destroyed the bride New Jerusalem cometh down from heaven? (Rev. xxi. 3.) But this common error hath been already sufficiently

refuted in the first lecture, by the consideration that our Lord, after having been a separate Spirit, did, while He abode upon earth between His resurrection and ascension, declare, that He was not yet ascended to His Father. It is not only to destroy Christ's proper and peculiar dignity of High Priest, to say that the souls of the faithful are at present in the very presence of God; but it is to anticipate the proper characteristic of the New Jerusalem condition of the risen saints at the beginning of the millennium, and of this whole earth at the end of the millennium. It is to destroy the difference between the blessedness of the departed spirit, and the glory of the risen saint, and to gainsay the tenor of all Scripture, and of all the creeds of the orthodox Church. Christ's single and sole prerogative it is to stand in the presence of God: as other priests must do their ministries by the light of the holy lamp, and the high priest only might do his by the light of the glory of God, so verily must every creature for a while continue at a distance, and Christ only be in the presence of God; through whom every creature must approach God, in whom the Church doth by faith indeed regard herself as now in the heavenly places; but only by faith, and not as yet by possession. This faith of our oneness in privilege with our High Priest doth give us boldness to enter within the vale, as the apostle declareth, (Heb. x.) But we shall not in very substance be brought into that most holy presence until the time and the event, whatever it be, which is declared in various parts of Scripture; as Eph. i. 27, "That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle;" (Col, i. 22,) "To present you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in His sight;" (Jude 24,) "To Him that is able to present you faultless in the presence of His glory:" the same which is signified in the 45th Psalm, by the bride being brought unto the king, and in the parable by the king coming in to look upon the guests of the marriage chamber; and also what is signified, as I take it, in the 15th of the Corinthians, by the delivering up of the kingdom unto the Father, and in the 21st of the Revelations, by the tabernacle of God being with men. Not that any one shall at any time see the Father in His Godhead, but that it shall be the privilege of the Church glorified to see a manifestation of Him in Christ, which now we wait for, but not until our gathering into the New Jerusalem shall enjoy. This, therefore, I place first in the proper dignity and peculiar prerogative of Christ, our High Priest, that He ever standeth in the presence of God.

Now what kind of ministry did the high priest then peform, when once a-year he was admitted into the most holy place of the dwelling of the Most High? The ministry which he performed on that most

solemn day of atonement, was to make intercession for the tabernacle and the priesthood; which two, the holy things and holy persons, were supposed according to the law to drink up the blood, and eat up the flesh of those victims which had been offered for the sins of the people all the year round. The sin confessed was supposed to pass over to the victim on whose head it was confessed; and of the sinful victim the blood sprinkled on the horns of the altar and before the mercy-seat, was supposed to transfer its defilement to them, and the flesh eaten by the priests to transfer its defilement to them: so that all the sin of Israel was understood to accumulate all the year round upon the tabernacle, and upon the priesthood; and upon the day of atonement, the high priest, and he only, might offer victims and make intercession for the sin of the tabernacle, and for the sin of the priesthood, which thus represented the sins of all Israel. To this the day of atonement, the high priest stood as it were the consecrated minister, and for this ministry he went into the holy presence of God; yet not without blood: which blood of the goat and of the bullock typified Christ's blood, as is expressly declared, Heb. xiii. 11. What then have we signified by this great action of atonement? for this is the proper act of Christ our High Priest. The sacrifice is, as we have said, the offering up of His own spotless flesh. His going with its blood into the holy place, is His rising from the dead and ascending into the presence of the Father, to present there the Lamb which had been slain for the sin of the world. There the Son of man, first born from the dead, rightful High Priest by primogeniture, being the first-begotten of God, doth present or offer in the holy place of the heavens His spotless sacrifice; first for all the priesthood,—that is, for the chosen ones, who are kings and priests, and shall fill the royal priestly office of creation. For them He makes atonement, and for them His intercession is accepted; in proof of which acceptance He sealeth them with his Father's Spirit of promise. And this is the offering for the priesthood, for the whole family of Aaron. Next, that sacrifice which He offered on the cross prevaileth to purify the sanctuary in its threefold divisions; the most holy place, the holy place, and the court of the altar. And what is this? We know that the most holy place is the heavens; and the heavenly things which needed to be purified with better sacrifices are, the New Jerusalem that cometh down from heaven; the inheritance of the saints now in heaven, but ready to be revealed in the last time; the new Jerusalem where is the tabernacle of God, and of which God is the light. This part of creation is the most holy place, in which, when we shall be raised in the likeness of Christ, we shall have our habitation; and the holy place,

considering things as they are to be in the millennium, is the land of Judea, where is the nation of kings and priests in flesh, and the rest of the world is the outward part of the temple, or rather the tabernacle; but as the millennium is not complete purification to anything save the true Jerusalem, forasmuch as death and decay are in every other place, I carry forward the complete fulfilment of the type contained in the atonement for the tabernacle to the period consequent upon the judgment, when, as I believe, the whole earth shall be the holy place, and the rest of creation shall be as it were the outward court. All the tabernacle or thing in which God is worshipped; that is, all creation considered as a place being holy, yet with a more holy, and a most holy, the most holy being the New Jerusalem, occupied by Christ and His risen saints, the Church; the more holy being the rest of this earth, and the holy the sun and moon and stars, which are created in a subservience to this earth all puny as scientific men may regard it in respect of magnitude and physical importance. But if out of man's loins the King of all the universe came, out of man's habitation the citadel, and palace, and temple of the universe may likewise well come. Now Christ, when He carried the body of man free into the presence of God, did carry the dust of the ground in thither, did carry all subservient matter of sun and moon and stars in thither, and finding acceptance for that body of His, did find acceptance for all body; that is, for all matter. And thus hath He made an atonement for the whole fallen visible creation, and for those who are to minister in it as kings and priests. This now I conceive to be the one great act of our High Priest; as His one great prerogative is to stand in the presence of God. To know therefore that Christ is our High Priest, as the raiment which He weareth in the vision doth teach us, is to know that atonement is made for us and for the whole world. If any one say, But where now is the universality of the atonement as to persons? I answer, That the day of atonement is not the typical form of that truth, but of the truth which I have explained above. The day of atonement is Christ's acting as High Priest in the heavens: but Christ in the heavens acteth only for the election of the Father, for the true Israel; not for the Israel that is so in the flesh, but for the Israel that is so in the spirit; and therefore this day of atonement was special in its application to the priests and to the tabernacle, and through them to all Israel. There are other typical forms of the truth of the universal atonement, of which Adam is the chief: but into this we are not called upon to enter here; only as it is a matter much agitated in the Church, and a question of the highest importance, I deem it good to guard everything which I say with respect to the special

and peculiar application of Christ's work, from being misconstrued into a gainsaying of the universality of the atonement made by His death, which I regard in my heart as a foundation of the faith as it was once delivered to the saints. Nevertheless, everything which concerns the Jewish people peculiarly, is for a type of the election, who are the true kings and priests; and so, also, I may say that everything in the Apocalypse also concerneth the election, being the history of their battles for the throne and sceptre of creation under, or rather in fellowship with, Christ, creation's Head.

This now is the great doctrine involved in the High Priesthood of Christ, that He for me hath been accepted of God, and I in Him am admitted into the presence of God; that He for me hath redeemed the lost inheritance of the world, and I in Him am crowned a king and priest for God;—all for me a poor worm, a wretched sinner, an infirm helpless creature! Oh, what is it to know this truth, that God looketh upon Christ as perfected High Priest, not for Himself alone, but for all over whom He is High Priest anointed! A high priest without many for whom He standeth to minister, is no high priest at all. A high priest doth nothing for himself; he is an intercessor for many; he is a sacrificer for many; he is accepted for many; he is honoured as the Head of many. To look upon Christ, therefore, as accepted before God for Himself alone, is to deny His High Priesthood, is to make void the very name of High Priest. If so be then that the substance and essence of this name and office of High Priest is, that what befalleth Him, and what betideth Him, befalleth and betideth Him not for Himself alone, but for all in Him represented, all in Him elected before the foundation of the world; then what are my fears, and what are my doubts, and what are my surmisings grounded upon my shortcomings? what are they but a denial that Christ is all accepted, all honoured, not for Himself, but for many? If I believe Christ to be my High Priest, I believe myself wholly accepted, wholly perfected, wholly dignified in Him; and to introduce fictions of transference from Him to me of righteousness, and from me to Him of guiltiness, is, in verity and truth, to do away with His name and office of High Priest, which cannot be a truth if such fictions are permitted.—Let then this first manifestation of the Son of man, in robes of the High Priest, assure every believer, that, as Christ is in the sight of God, so is he: as Christ is in the favour of God, so art thou, O believer, whosoever thou art: as Christ is in the purpose of God, so art thou, O believer, whosoever thou art. This is the meed of faith, this is the purchase, this the power, this the excellency of faith, that gift of God,—to bring you, without let or stay, into the unity of Christ's favour, safety, perfection, dignity, and glory.

Such is the great and precious truth presented to us by means of the robe and girdle of the high priest, with which our Saviour in this vision appears invested: and methinks it should stop the mouth of those ignorant and pestilent decriers of the Apocalypse, who consider nothing so meritorious as to prevent a Christian from making it his special study; and it ought to teach wiser and better men to give more considerate heed to the symbols of this book, which are nothing less than the language for appropriating unto Christ every type, history, and prophecy, which had been thrown out before, as anticipations of His all-inclusive person and office. But there is yet another great truth taught us under the vesture with which He is clothed, and which the high priest might not wear in the holy presence of God, but only without the veil, according to the commandment of the Lord, written in the 16th of Leviticus, verse 3: "He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with a linen mitre shall he be attired." Thus went he, all in white without an ornament, without any glory, into the presence of God, on the high day of atonement. But when he was finished with this the holiest part of his office, and had no more to go in before the Lord, but only to finish the work of the day, in the presence of the people it was thus commanded him of God, verse 23: "And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments and come forth to offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself and for the people." Now forasmuch as our great High Priest appeareth in the vision arrayed not in the holy but in the glorious garments, not in the pure whiteness of unrefracted light, where God abideth, but in the glorious vestments of many colours, for the instruction and entertainment of a creature's sense, we gather beyond a question that the scene of the vision is not in heaven, in the presence of God within the veil, but on earth without the veil, in the presence, and for the edification of living men; in other words, that it is a vision concerning the Church in flesh, and not the Church disembodied, seeing we know that the flesh is what the veil signified, (Heb. x. 20.) The vision therefore concerneth what is called the Church visible; which truly is the only Church on earth. What divines have chosen to call the Church invisible upon earth, is not recognised in Scripture by such a name. In Scripture, visibility is essential to the Church in flesh, and is indeed its proper and peculiar distinction from the Church disembodied. The true —

opposites are not Church visible and Church invisible; for these are one, as the tabernacle was one, though part invisible within the veil, and the other visible without the veil; but Church visible and apostasy visible; or, to drop the use of the word visible, where it is of no use, the true opposites are, the Church and the apostasy. This vision, therefore concerneth the Church on earth, the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein, (Rev. xi. 1,) and not "the court which is without the temple, which is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty-and-two months," (Rev. xi. 1, 2.) In this remark, I anticipate the progress of the Revelation, in which there is no distinct mention of the apostasy before the 9th chapter. There is, first, Christ revealed as Head over His Church on earth, contained in the first three chapters, which are all addressed to churches subsisting in cities of the earth: there is next Christ revealed in His relations unto the Church in heaven, and His actings as the Head thereof, against the kings of the earth, who being put in the place of vicegerents or lord lieutenants of Christ and His saints, seek to usurp the power unto themselves, and therefore are, after a sevenfold succession of judicial visitations, at length dethroned and dispossessed by the Lamb which was slain, who, by conquering death, appeared in heaven Redeemer and rightful possessor of the inheritance promised unto Him who should bruise the serpent's head. This second revelation of Christ, acting from the invisible, and with the invisible Church, is contained between the 4th and the 11th chapters; after which we are introduced to the knowledge of the Church and the apostasy, as the two great opposites in the world,—the one the head of all the good, the other the head of all the evil. This occupies from chapter xi. to chapter xx. Now the difference between the first and the last of these revelations of Jesus Christ and His Church on earth, is, that the first, or the vision before us, deals with the Church as in peril of apostasy, to preserve her from it as God dealt with Adam before he fell. The second deals with the Church fallen into apostasy, to preserve a people in the midst of it, and to embody a people who should protest against it, in whose favour and behalf God might appear, and by whose means He might work His wrath and indignation upon the harlot spouse, Babylon the Great.—We conclude, therefore, from the raiment in which Jesus chooseth to appear at the head and front of this vision, as well as from the substance of the vision itself, and from the comparison of it with the other visions of this book, that it hath wholly reference to the Church on earth, considered as apart from an apostasy, while the apostasy or man of sin was not revealed, and wherever he is not yet revealed as a dominant

power, and wherever he has been cast out from his dominion; for example, to the churches in this land, not considered as national, nor yet considered as Protestant, but as many churches, with their angels, presbyters, and deacons, and ordinances of divine appointment; for example also, to the churches in America, the churches in Germany and other parts of the world, where the apostasy hath been cast out, as a ruling power. While I thus give to this vision, its proper and peculiar application to the times of the Church, anterior to the apostasy, and to those churches where the apostasy hath been ejected or suppressed, or hath never come; as, for example, the Syrian churches in India: I do not prevent its application likewise to those witnesses who are found amongst the apostate nations, because, no prophecy, though it have a proper and peculiar application, can at all be restricted to that private interpretation, but, revealing the truth of God and of Christ, must in its bearings and its effects, be co-extensive with the rights of God and Christ,—that is, co-extensive with creation. In this larger sense, the vision is intended to set forth our Lord Jesus Christ as the great Head of the Church to every saint, and to every believer, for a High Priest, a Mediator, and an Intercessor, between God and every one of His people; and likewise as the universal Bishop, from whom every minister and pastor doth receive his charge and his orders in the Church, counsel and consolation in fulfilling his painful yet blessed and gracious office,—from whom also every member of His Church, through the pastor and minister whom He hath set over them, doth receive guidance and encouragement in every time of need, so as that we may say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The seer describes the most remarkable features of His person, beginning with the appearance of His head. "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;"—or, being literally rendered, "white as snow-white wool;" that is to say, those parts of the head of a man which are covered with hair, were as wool for whiteness, even such wool as in its whiteness rivaleth the snow. For of the other parts of his countenance they are said to be "as the sun

shineth in his strength: What now is conveyed to us by this symbol? Let us, to answer this question, betake ourselves to the Old Testament, whereof the Apocalypse is the key. In the vision of the seventh chapter of Daniel, we have the Ancient of Days thus described, (verse 9) "whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool." The person here represented is doubtless the person of the Father, as distinguished from the person of the Son; who is represented like the Son of man receiving the kingdom from His Father's hand. If so, then, these are symbols of the pure and absolute Godhead. Now, how whiteness should symbolise the Godhead, I have already touched upon more than once. It is the appearance of unbroken light, ere yet it hath passed through any medium, or been reflected from any terrestrial object. As light, after it hath passed through various elements, doth change its pure whiteness into the various colours, both primary and secondary, with which the earth and the heavens are diversified, so Godhead, which in itself hath no variations or diversities, when it hath passed through the medium of humanity, in the person of the Christ, doth assume the various forms of human reason, which are expressed in the holy Scriptures, and which were seen and handled in Christ Jesus, who is the Word of Life. This, I take to be the root of the symbol. Why it should be placed in the hairs in our vision, I know not, except that every other part of the body is occupied with symbols of another kind. The robe covering His body, His feet being as fine brass. When there is no occasion for such various information, as in the transfiguration, (Matt. xvii. 2,) it is said that His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And when He appeared to St Paul, on the way to Damascus, there was around Him, and proceeding from Him, such a glory as surpassed the brightness of the sun at noon-day. And I have no doubt, that had it not been for the variety of the things to be expressed by this symbol, He would have been exhibited exactly as the Ancient of Days appeared unto Daniel, with His garment white as snow, and the hair of His head as pure wool. And why should the characteristic symbols of the Ancient of Days be here applied unto the Son of man? In order to teach us, that Christ is the manifestation of the absolute Godhead; that he who seeth Christ, seeth the Father; and that whatever forms, appearances, names, or attributes can by human language be given to the Father, are given to Him, as seen in the Son. Moreover, by having the person of our vision thus identified with the Ancient of Days, we have also the action there assigned to the Ancient of Days claimed for the Son of man. And what is that action? It is the destruction of the fourth beast, or Western Roman

empire, in the ten Gothic kingdoms subsisting, that is, Papal Europe, with fiery judgment, because of its obedience to that usurper of Divine dignities, the Pope, symbolised by the little horn. This is the chief action attributed there to the Ancient of Days; and after a season there is a secondary action of destroying the remnants of the three former beasts, which are the Assyrian, Babylonian, or Euphrates power now subsisting in Turkey, the Persian power, and the Greek power, which hath now re-appeared again. This act of judging the apostate kingdoms of Papal Christendom, and the other kingdoms of the world, is attributed to the Ancient of Days, in the Book of Daniel, in order to show the activity of God in human affairs, and His purpose at length to give the kingdoms unto the Son of man. Here, however, where everything which God doth is represented as done by Christ, as surely it ever hath been, and ever will; this act of judgment is assigned to the Son, according to Christ's declaration in the days of His flesh, that God had committed all judgment unto the Son, because He is the Son of man. From this feature of His person, therefore, we learn, not only a new lesson of His Divinity, but likewise a new lesson of His office; that it is He by whom God will bring the judgment upon the apostate kingdoms, according as it is written in the second Psalm: "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And, because this same honour is promised to all His saints, in the second chapter of the Revelations, and in the very language of the second Psalm, I cannot but believe that before the judgments fall in upon the apostate kingdoms, we shall be taken from this earth to be with the Lord, and to enact along with Him that direful seventh woe, the last of this sinful world.

If we reflect upon the undertaking which God proposed to Himself of bringing in His only-begotten Son, as the Redeemer and Head of a creation already in existence; we will see the wisdom, and I may say the necessity, of that method which we are now unfolding. It is necessary, first, that God should assert unto Himself the right over all creation by a series of events, proving Him to be the Owner, the Governor, and the Upholder thereof. For it is necessary unto a bequest, that he who bequeaths should be proved the possessor. Then there must be, in the next place, a series of promises and prophetic actions, giving over the possession into the hand of His Son, made man. This now is what the Old Testament containeth: God's acts to prove Himself rightful owner of all, and God's promised acts to transfer that ownership to His Son, when He should be brought into the world. But it needeth all along to be likewise shown, that this Son, the receiver of all, is likewise, as to His Godhead, one with

the Father, the giver of all; whereby the undertaking is rendered more difficult, and the method must be more involved. The language and acts in which God asserts His ownership, must be such as may be capable of being claimed by Him to whom the ownership is transferred. Yea, all along while there is a sufficiency of distinctive language to represent the personality of the one as absolute God the Father, in His distinctness from the personality of the other, as God and man united, the infinite passing into the finite; there must be such identity of language, also, as to prove that Godhead is not the peculiar property of one, but the common property of both. And yet in such wise must this be done, as that it may not appear a fictitious but a real transaction, that the Godhead is giving up the creation into the hands of the God-man, Redeemer of it. This is very carefully guarded against in the Old Testament; for to suppose even the appearance of a fiction in any transaction of God, is to subvert all reality whatever, is to sanction all deception, is to deify a lie. This distinction then between the Father in the absolute Godhead alone subsisting, and the Son as He subsisteth acting within the bounds of manhood, being most carefully preserved, as in that very vision of Daniel is exemplified by the transaction between the Ancient of Days and the Son of man; there ariseth a necessity for another, and as it were a supplementary revelation which shall guard against the error of believing that these two, though distinct, are separate in their essence; that is to say, there must be a revelation gathering up into one, and claiming for Messiah all those actings of the Father for reducing the world into the possession of the Son; to the end it may be seen, that though the absolute Godhead be the originator and designer of this transference, the actor and executor thereof is not the absolute Godhead of the Father, but that same Godhead acting in the Son; or to give the matter in the simple and true language of Scripture that it might be manifest that the Father doth nothing without the Son. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do: for whatsoever he seeth the Father do, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater things than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him," (John v. 19–24.)—O my God, I give thee thanks that thou has taught me the mystery of God and the Father, and of the Son

and of Christ, and that I am able to testify of the Father and of the Son. This is my purpose and my delight in these expositions, O God; in these expositions of the revelation of Jesus Christ my Lord. I see that this book is but the knitting up of many threads into one glorious tissue for adorning the person of my Lord. I see that it is but the gathering of many flowers by God's own hand planted, by God's own hand culled from the garden of heaven, to wreathe one glorious chaplet for the brows of Him who erewhile was crowned with thorns. O cold age of the world! O degenerate age of the Church! which discerneth not, which feeleth and acknowledgeth not, the grandeur and the excellency of this undertaking of God, by one book of wisdom to condense the spirit of all prophetic books of wisdom; by one mighty act of divine wisdom to write Jesus Christ the doer, the possessor of Godhead's mind and purpose, the inheritor and upholder of creation's fulness.

"And his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." This carries us to the last vision of Daniel contained in the 10th, 11th, and 12th chapters, of which vision the revealer is thus described, (x. 5:) "Behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz, his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Of this vision three of the principal features are embodied in the vision before us—to wit, the girdle of fine gold, the eyes like lamps of fire, and the feet like polished brass. It is only a novice in the study of the Apocalypse, who will consider these coincidences as accidental; and the question therefore occurs, What purpose doth such a coincidence serve? This purpose it serveth, of teaching us that the Divine Person who revealed that glorious vision is the same who standeth before the seer of the Apocalypse; in other words, that He who showed Himself to, and in the Prophets spake, is the same who became man of the virgin's substance, and died upon the cross. Or to express it again in the pure language of revelation, "of His fulness did they all receive." Moreover, this coincidence doth instruct us, that the Person who watched over the Jewish Church, is the same who watcheth over the Christian Church, for that vision is expressly given to teach Daniel what shall befall his people in the latter days: also that it is the same Jesus who hath determined the times before appointed: for hear what is said of Him, in the seventh verse of the 12th chapter, "And I heard the man clothed in linen which was upon the waters of the rivers, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto

heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished, to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." In one word it proveth to us, that Christ and He only is the revealer of the secrets of God; as it is written, "The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him."

What confirms this conclusion derived from the reference to the Prophet Daniel, is this peculiarity of that vision, or rather of the revelation connected with it, for there is first a vision, and then a revelation of it by the person seen: of which revelation the object is, to teach the things which should befall the Jewish people in the latter days; but the source of the revelation whence it was derived is very remarkable, being thus expressed (Dan. x. 21,) "I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth." It is not unusual in the Scriptures to represent God's remembrance of things past, and purpose of things future, as written in a book (Ps. xl. 7; lvi. 8; Isa. lv. 6; Mal. iii. 16:) and in the 7th chapter of Daniel, to which our attention has already been twice directed in this vision, it is thus said in ver. 7: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." But nowhere do I find in the Prophets, except in this place, an expression such as this, "I will show thee that which is noted in the writing of truth." And while the use of it stamps this vision as most important and most certain, it doth teach us that the person who ushered in the vision, is the keeper and the opener of the Scripture of truth;—in other words, is the occupier of the bosom of God, and the revealer of the secret things thereof unto the Church, counsellor at once from God and to God's creatures. And seeing that this person's official characteristics of golden girdle, eyes of fire, and feet of polished brass, are all put upon the Son of man in the vision before us, we know that Christ was the fountain where Daniel drank up his wisdom; that Christ was the glorious one whose aspect turned the vigour of Daniel into corruption, and took away his strength; whose voice of his words when he heard them, laid his faculties into a deep sleep, until some one of the ministers who waited upon his glory helped the prophet out of his entranced fear, and expounded to him those words of the Scripture of truth.

There is yet another peculiarity of this vision, which is, that the glorious personage who makes it known, doth when the revelation is finished perform an action, (xii. 7,) which is interpreted, (Rev. x. 5, 6,) to signify His taking possession of the terraqueous globe, and His proclaiming the end of time, and the beginning of the eternal age. Now it is remarkable that in that place He appeareth with a little

open book in His one hand; even that same writing of truth into which He gave Daniel some insight, but afterwards (xii. 9) commanded it to be closed up and sealed till the time of the end. When this time of the end is come, when the seven thunders have uttered their voices; or rather, while they are doing it, behold this same person, with His face as the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire, (Rev. x. 1; Dan. x. 6,) appears to John with that book now opened, and commandeth him to eat it, and then to give it forth, which also John hath done, in the chapters of the Apocalypse following the 10th, where this vision occurreth. This remark casteth another light upon that part of the Apocalypse, showing it to be the expansion and opening of the last vision of Daniel, containing the particulars of the time, times, and a half, of the one thousand two hundred and ninety days, and of the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. Of this remark we shall make use in the proper place. Meanwhile we put it forth, to show what wonderful, what divine wisdom there is in the Apocalypse, which our blind guides do glory to be ignorant of; and, lest their ignorance should be exposed, religiously and sanctimoniously, and with great affectation of humility would prevent the people from exploring for themselves, or listening to those who, like me, are bold enough to face the obloquy and contempt of an infidel Church, in daring to interpret it.

Having thus gathered to our Lord that glory which is given to Him by the appropriation of those symbols, peculiar to Daniel's revealer of the Scripture of truth, we now come to explain the substance of the symbols themselves: "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." To the interpretation of these, and the other symbols contained in this vision, we have a great help in the seven epistles or charges, which the personage clothed upon with these emblems doth send to the angels of the several churches. For there is this remarkable rule observed, that each of these charges hath its signature, as we would say; or superscription, as the ancients would have said; that is, the designation of the person from whom it comes;—this most important part of the epistle, written in terms derived from the emblems with which the Son of man is clothed upon in the vision, or from the words which are put into His mouth. I mean to say, that taking the first chapter from the 12th verse, where the vision begins, including always the 8th, which we have shown reason to believe is the Person's annunciation of Himself; taking these eight verses, the 8th, and from the 13th to the 18th inclusive, which contain the portraiture by form and word, of the inditer of the letters, you have the materials out of which the seven superscriptions of the letters, the

seven designations of the inditer, are taken. That vignette, or emblazonment, which stands at the head of the seven writings, is referred to in them all for terms and figures by which the writer pleases to designate himself. To the Church of Ephesus He takes this designation: "These things saith He who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." To the angel of the Church of Pergamos: "These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." And to the angel of the Church of Thyatira: "These things saith He which hath His eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass." And so in the other four, not but that there are additional words thrown in, further as it were to illustrate and explain the character of the Universal Bishop, but that the substance, and in general the very words, of the seven signatures or superscriptions by which Christ pleaseth to designate Himself, are taken from the picture and from the words issuing out of the mouth of the pictured person. Now, while I observe, in passing, what a stamp of dignity and importance is thus put upon the emblematic imagery of this book, and justify myself to all wise men who tremble at the word of God, in that minuteness with which I am going into these emblems; I do draw the particular and patient attention of those who are minded to study this prophecy, to the fact stated above, as a great help to the interpretation of the symbols. For, doubtless, it is not without a meaning, and a most significant end, that to each of these churches He selecteth such a designation of Himself. And therefore, by studying what be the peculiarities of these several churches, we shall be led to discover the reason why this or that symbol, rather than another, is chosen to designate himself in writing to that Church; and thus a very great light will be cast upon the meaning of the symbol itself.

Now to return from this general observation, and to apply it to the exposition of the symbols before us, we find that they are used in addressing the angel of the Church in Thyatira, who had permitted to remain in its communion certain vile and abominable persons, who should have been separated, and, if they repented not, cast out of the communion. To a Church thus careless of separating the precious from the vile, to the minister of a Church, soft and relenting, where he should have been firm and severe, Christ thus proposeth that knowledge of Himself which He would have such ministers and such churches ever to bear in mind: "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass." I am inclined, therefore, to believe that this title taken towards a Church into which much impurity had crept, denotes holiness, putting itself forth in the way of distinguishing between the

vile and the precious, between the evil and the good; and not only distinguishing, but likewise bringing into great tribulation, and even destroying, in case they repent not. For to such extremities He declareth that He will proceed, verses 22 and 23; "By which," saith He, "all the churches shall know that I am He which searches the reins and the heart, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

And this seems to me to afford the proper key to the two symbols; "His eyes like a flame of fire," and "His feet like fine brass;" both denoting holiness and purity. The eye like a flame of fire, signifies looks which cannot bear iniquity, but will consume it, as fire doth the chaff, and the stubble, and the wood,—looks before which nothing can stand that hath not been tried in the fire, and there purified of its dross. Thus also appeared He in the vision above referred to, unto the Prophet Daniel, when about to tell him of the long judgments and vexations with which Israel should be tried, until the time of the end. And in like guise appeareth He unto John, now that He is about to try His Church with tribulation, and cast her into the furnace to be refined. It is that constant feature of our great Bishop, before which iniquity in His Church should be scorched up. It is that aspect of His holiness, which, being present to us, will scatter and put to flight those impurities of the sense which ever arise to vex and trouble us. We may not expect to be without these trials of the flesh; and therefore it is necessary that we should ever have before us these eyes like flames of fire, in order to dispel them. Look upon your Bishop as the holy one of God; let Him ever be in your mind as the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire; and so you may expect to stand in all holiness, and to be filled with the fellowship of the same. He was declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness. He was the holy thing from His conception, which should be called the Son of God. Albeit He was of our very substance, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and liable to all our sinless infirmities, and not to be known from a common man, in every respect; yet was there in Him that Almighty Spirit of holiness which showed itself at the resurrection, by changing the mortal into the immortal, the corruptible into the incorruptible. And in like manner is He revealed in the Spirit to every one of His children in whom there is a spirit of holiness, which, like fire, doth feed upon the corruptions of the flesh, and consume them; so that the true servant of the Lord delighteth well to contemplate his Bishop as having the eyes of fire; and every one to whom He hath given power to become a son of God hath likewise an eye of fire to search into and consume iniquity within himself and others. That this is the right interpretation of the "eyes like unto

a flame of fire," doth, I think, clearly appear from the words with which He doth conclude this epistle: "All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and heart;" as it is written, (Ps. vii. 9,) "The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." And again, (Ps. xi. 4,) "His eyes behold, his eye-lids try, the children of men."

After the same manner do I interpret the second symbol, by which our Bishop is set forth; "His feet like fine brass." The word translated fine brass, is one to interpret which aright hath puzzled the learned. It is composed of two words; the one the common word for brass, and the other derived from a root which signifies to flow, or to be liquid, or to melt. The true meaning of the word therefore would be, brass made liquid, or melted. Now we find that the laver, and his foot, (Exod. xxxviii. 8,) in which the priests washed themselves, was made of the looking-glasses of the women which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Working upon this idea, it is a discovery not many years old, that if you take the finest brass, such as mirrors were wont to be made of, and cast it into the furnace, you produce another kind of brass, which will take on no rust, nor tarnish from exposure to water or weather of any kind. Of this the laver and his foot were made, to the end that, though filled with water, and ever exposed to the action of the air, they might never tarnish. And of this brass melted over again, I believe our Lord's feet are represented to be in the passage before us; and because it is never tarnished, it is, as I think, said that His feet were like unto melted brass, as if they burned in a furnace. Now what is the meaning of the symbol thus explained? It is, to express His holiness, that when He should come to tread down His enemies, to tread the wicked under His feet, to tread the winepress of the wrath of God, though He walked amongst defilement, and did tread upon abomination, yet were His feet not tarnished therewith, but remained in their original purity and brightness. This metal, (χαλκολιβανοι,) brass molten, is chosen, because, as now appeareth, it taketh no tarnish from the pollution of the air, nor from the pollution of the earth, nor yet from the pollution of the sea. So also His eyes, though they look upon all iniquity, are not polluted therewith; and His feet, though they tread down all iniquity, are not polluted therewith. The fire refineth all things, and is not polluted by them. They come in contact with it, and their impurities are expelled. Their dross is carried off, and the pure metal floweth out in a pure stream. So likewise these feet of brass trample upon the lion, and the adder, and the young lion; upon the mire and the clay, and the mass of rottenness, upon the

devil, upon the grave, upon corruption; but are never defiled by any of them. This is the mystery of the Son of God dwelling in flesh of sin, dwelling there in the days of His flesh, looking into its vileness from the centre of the soul within; looking upon it with eyes of fire, which did expel and consume the sin within it, labouring in the midst of it, as the Holy Ghost saith, as one "in a fearful pit, and in the miry clay." But being the Son of God, endued with eyes of fire, and feet of untarnished brass, He looked upon it, and walked throughout all its polluted chambers, and was not polluted by it Himself. Yea, He did cast it into death, as into a refining furnace, and raise it thence again, holy and incorruptible. And as He abode in the days of His flesh, so now He abideth in the renewed whom He doth sanctify and purify, with those all-penetrating eyes of fire, and those incorruptible feet of brass, and so also abideth He in the Church, as we shall see from considering His epistle to the angel of Thyatira.

There is yet another confirmation of the interpretation given above of the eyes of fire, as denoting holy and penetrating insight into the hearts and reins of men, and inward secrets of actions; and I deem it a confirmation of the greater importance, as being derived from the Revelation itself. In the 4th chapter, at the 5th verse, the Holy Ghost is set forth under the symbol of seven lamps of fire, "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Now, in the 6th verse, 5th chapter, the same seven Spirits of God are set forth as the seven eyes of the Lamb: "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." These two passages being put together, show us that the eyes of fire which are in the head of Christ, do denote that spirit of holiness which proceedeth from His humanity, even the Holy Ghost, who, in the greatness of His condescension, hath consented to become eyes to the Lamb of God, by means of which His manhood may be enabled to discern and to scorch up the iniquity of all the things which the Father would have redeemed and presented unto Himself. Moreover, when Christ cometh forth out of heaven, in righteousness to judge and to make war, (Rev. xix. 12,) His eyes are as a flame of fire. This symbol being introduced into such a vision, which concerneth the destruction of Antichrist, and all who adhere to Him, and in which these being no other than symbols of powerful majesty and destructive war, we may nothing doubt that the eyes of fire with which our Bishop pleaseth to present Himself, are an emblem of that holy severity which visiteth transgression in His Church, and will maintain holiness therein. I have one other remark to make upon the

feet of brass, confirmatory of the interpretation which hath been given above, that it signifies down-treading of iniquity, without any stain derived unto Himself from that most necessary exercise of His holiness. This confirmation is derived from the prophecies of Micah, (iv. 13,) where the nations being gathered together with the foul and arrogant purpose of destroying Zion at the time of her pain and labour to bring forth, saying, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion;" it is added, "But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel, for they shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor: arise and thrash, O daughter of Zion! for I will make thy horns iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people, and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." This refers to the custom in the East of treading out the corn with the hoofs of oxen; and doth signify that God would use His people in that day to thrash the nations, and tread out of them with severe strokes, the substance of His own glory, and of the world's after well-being. And to the end His people, the Jewish people, might be well accomplished for such an undertaking, He would make their horns, with which to push them and toss them, and scatter them, of iron which breaketh all things; and He would make their hoofs, with which they should trample them, of brass, that they might not be soon worn out with their much labour. To the same effect it is said, by the Prophet Malachi, (iv. 2,) that "in the day when the Sun of Righteousness ariseth on the Jewish people with healing in his wings, they shall go forth from their captivity, and grow up as calves of the stall;" grow to be stately and powerful oxen: and then, saith he, "Ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be as ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." But His people, in this great work of breaking the nations to pieces, are but, as it were, the battle-axe in the hand of the Lord; who in that day shall put forth His power as an avenger, as it is written in the same figurative language, (Isaiah lxiii. 3,) "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled on my garment, and I will stain all my raiment . . . . And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth;" here referring to the great action of the 19th chapter of the Apocalypse, where He comes with that stained raiment, to execute the direful purpose of God against the beast, and the kings of the whole

world, who dare to defy God, and to make war with the Lamb. No doubt, therefore, I think, can remain upon the mind of any person that these symbols of the eyes of fire and feet of brass are rightly interpreted.

The next characteristic feature of our great ecclesiastical Head is expressed in these sublime words: "His voice was as the sound of many waters;" so liquid, and so strong. The preceding features, as hath been said, are taken from the last of Daniel's visions; where, as in the vision before us, the characteristic of His voice follows immediately that of His feet, but is given by quite another similitude: "His feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude;" whereas in our vision it is, "His feet like unto fine brass, and His voice as the sound of many waters." Why is it that so sudden a transition is made from the vision of Daniel? Because by this new feature God would claim for His Son identity with another great vision of the Old Testament, and put Him in possession of another of His rights. That vision is the vision of the likeness of the glory of the God of Israel, which Ezekiel saw, whereof it is thus written, (xliii. 2,) "And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory; and it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision which I saw when I came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the river Chebar." This is the only place in the Old Testament where the similitude of our text occurreth, and therefore there can remain no doubt, that to this our attention is solicited, Several times indeed in the Psalms and the Prophets, the tumultuous gatherings of the nations, against the Lord and His Christ, are compared to the waves and floods of the mighty deep, and to the rushings of many waters; and the Lord's voice which stilleth them, and forceth them back to their caverns of silence, and restraineth their impotent rage, is set against them and declared to be mightier by far. But this is altogether a different use, not in the way of similitude, but in the way of contrast; not as the emblem of His voice, but as the emblem of the voice of the wicked. And like as there be two kinds of impression, the most opposite to one another, made by the rushing of mighty waters; the one, the fearful commotion of the tempestuous and troubled sea, the stunning noise of many waterfalls around you, or the roaring violence of the impetuous stream, which are not fit similitudes for the majestic melodious mighty voice of God, but fit enough, yea, the fittest, for I have heard the like, to express the confusion and the turmoil of a thousand agitated, fearful, passionate minds; so is there another impres-

sion made upon the mind, and methinks it is the fullest that enters by the ear, the impression of a mighty river flowing in its strength between its silent banks, whose sound filleth the spaces around, and hath you, and possesseth you, wherever you stand, and whithersoever you look; and is in your ear more satisfying than any choral symphony; over your soul is more powerful and overawing, yet tranquillising, than any melody, save that which it is intended to represent: for there is such a melody, and I have heard it likewise, the melody of ten thousand voices, lifted up in praise to God amidst the dales of my native land. To one who heareth from a small distance, this stream of multitudinous voices sweetly attuned to the praise of God, wafted along upon the well-pleased bosom of the evening gale, and reaching the ear haply at some sudden winding of the valley, it doth entrance the faculties of motion, of speaking, and suspend the vital act of breathing; so sweet and so powerful it is, so liquid and so strong. O my dear native land, and ye worthy devout dwellers therein, how I rejoice to have been born of your stock, and to have been reared in the midst of your occupations! I would not part with the remembrance and associations of your open-field worship, and your hill-side sacraments, for all that I have since seen and heard of royal concerts and cathedral services, though with these I have likewise great sympathy, and have derived from them much pious enjoyment. Be not ashamed, O Scotland! of that freedom in worshiping God, which was the salvation of our Church in most perilous times.

I judge, therefore, that the similitude chosen to represent Christ, is taken from its being equal to the voice of a harmonious multitude; and this I have, from the use of it in the Apocalypse, twice over, to represent the voice of the Church in heaven, (Rev. xiv. 2,) "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters. . . . . And they sang as it were a new song, before the throne and before the four beasts, and before the elders." And again, (xix. 6,) "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." In both these cases, the voice like many waters proceedeth from the congregation and general assembly of the Church of the first-born in heaven; and in both cases, with the similitude of many waters is conjoined the similitude of thunderings. Not that these two are intended to express the same sound, but that the stream of the melody was at times burst in upon with thundering Alleluias, as in some of Handel's oratorios you have thunder bursts of the full chorus, every now and then in the midst of the stream of melody. Now if any one inquire why the voice of Christ and the voice of His glorified Church should be set

forth by the same similitude; I think I can give a satisfactory reason for this coincidence which occurreth not only in the Revelations but also in Ezekiel i. 24, when, speaking of the cherubim, or four living creatures, and their wheels, which are a figure of the Church, He saith, "I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech as the noise of an host." The reason is, that as the voice of a man, though guided and instructed by the head, is yet acted and performed by organs of the body, being therefore at once of the head and of the body, so the voice of Christ and the voice of His Church, which is His body, are but one, and therefore must have the same similitude. In confirmation of this, the voices in the Apocalypse are made not to proceed from Him that sat upon the throne, but from the throne itself, (iv. 5,) "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." Now within the circle of that throne was nothing but those cherubim, or living creatures, (ver. 6,) and when these living creatures speak, at the opening of the successive seals, their voice is, as it were, the noise of thunder," (Rev. iv. 1.) So likewise in Ezekiel, in that passage where the noise of their wings is compared to the voice of the Almighty; it is said, (ver. 25,) "it was from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood and had let down their wings. Now upon this firmament there was the likeness of the throne, and the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God, whose likeness is declared (Ezek. xliii. 2) to have been like the noise of many waters." Our idea, therefore, of the symbol is, that it is derived from the great multitude of those who utter the voice of Christ; as it is written, (Psalm lxviii. 11,) "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of those that published it." It teacheth us the very great completeness and closeness of the symbol, that the Church is the body of Christ. It teacheth us that He never speaketh, but through His numerous Church; as it is written, (Hosea ii. 21,) "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and they shall hear Jezreel." It signifies that while other things are outward, the Church is inward unto Christ, composing with Him one organised frame, and acting with Him one unanimous purpose. It signifieth that, as He, by His personal Godhead, hath the pre-eminence over all, we, by our oneness with His manhood, have the superiority of every other creature; angel, archangel, and every name named in this world, and in that which is to come. And because Christ doth thus honour His Church to speak, to preach His mind to all creatures

which have a being, and that Church is the voice of a multitude: therefore it is, that the symbol of many waters is used to express the voice of Christ. And in confirmation of this interpretation of the symbol we have to adduce the authority of the Holy Ghost, who saith, (Rev. xvii. 15,) "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," which from their numerousness are compared to the numerous drops which compose the waters of the ocean; or, if you please, the waters of many confluent streams. Now the Church in heaven is described (Rev. vii. 8) as a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and peoples, and tongues; and therefore their voice, which, as we have seen, is likewise the voice of Christ, answereth to the interpretation of the symbol of many waters.

So much for the substance and significance of the symbol, by which the voice of the Son of man is expressed. And now let us further examine what light this note of identification between the persons of our vision and the glory of Ezekiel, doth cast upon both passages. By comparing the expressions of Rev. xiv. 2, xix. 6, setting forth the Church in heaven, with the expressions of Ezekiel i. 24, it will clearly appear that the four living creatures in Ezekiel are the same with the Church in heaven, and that He above the firmament whose throne they upbear is surely no other than the Son of man, is surely no other than the enthroned one of the next vision. Now, this is a conclusion of the utmost importance, inasmuch as it doth, first of all, determine what was the meaning of those cherubim which stood in the holy place over the mercy-seat, bearing upon their heads, and upon their bosoms, and upon their wings, the glory of the God of Israel. His throne, His resting-place, which well He loveth, even His Church out of mankind, with whom were His delights before the world was made; elect in him before the foundation of the world; coming into manifestation the moment Adam fell, because then the mystery of God was ripe for that revelation. Election could no longer be concealed, and now became the palladium of the hopeful world. And symbolical of the high office of the Church to be kings and priests, they stood and watched on Eden's walls to guard the tree of life; God's wardens, God's watchmen, God's men of might and standard-bearers, foundations of His royal city, pillars of His holy temple; not only possessors of Eden yet to be, and privileged of the tree of life, but likewise resisters of the evil for the foe's sake, that they might still the enemy and the avenger. Then when the Lord built unto Himself a tabernacle, He gave them the holiest place of the tabernacle of the Most High, as His wings, as His body, as His organs of speech, there they stood upon the mercy-seat; and

the ark containing laws, and the nourishment of flesh was beneath their feet, under their government. All this mystery, I say, of the cherubim, which we shall have ample room to discourse of under the next vision, is explained by our study of this symbol of the voice of Christ and of His Church; because Ezekiel, who had the vision of that glory by the river of Chebar first, and next in the temple of Jerusalem before its destruction, and next returning in glory to the re-edified temple, expressly declareth that he knew it to be the cherubim, (x. 20.)

It is not now the place to inquire into the particular forms and appearances of those cherubim; it is enough for our present purpose to have identified them by their voice with the body of Christ, the glorified Church in heaven. This is the only point which is brought under our consideration in the passage before us: the rest will take its proper place under the visions of the fourth and fifth chapters; only we do now claim, by this token of identity of voice, for our High Priest, all the greatness and glory which pertain to that appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah which Ezekiel saw. From this glorious person he received his commission as a prophet; and from Him he likewise received the roll of his prophecies, (chap. ii.) Ezekiel therefore was a servant sent by Christ to prepare His way, one of those many who received of His fulness. Moreover, it was from this same image of the invisible God, that he received commandment to destroy the city of Jerusalem, (ix. 1.) Yea, and these cherubim furnished the fire with which it was consumed, (x. 11;) teaching us, that the judgments in times past, were brought by Christ through His prophets upon earth, and through His Church in glory, even as in the visions (Rev. viii. and ix.) they continue to be brought. Moreover, for a habitation of this glory is the house of the temple rebuilt at Jerusalem, which, being finished according to the pattern and dimensions, (Ezek. xli. and xlii.,) is taken possession of by this same glory riding upon the cherubim, (xliv. 1-6,) whereupon He that dwelleth between the cherubim uttered these words: "Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile." I know not whether these illustrations of the glory and the greatness of our Lord may prove wearisome to some, who have not understood, nor reflected upon, the mystery of Christ, to prefigure which and keep up the hope of it, all prophecy, yea, all providence, yea, and creation itself, were ordered of God; but to me, who have learned to desire the sight of Christ in all things, and to discern the unity of the purpose of God in the diversity of all His operations, these followings of the Apo-

calyptic thread through the intricacies of the past, these openings of the various prophetic chambers with the Apocalyptic key, do impart an unspeakable delight; and in the hope that some chosen servants of God will take up the method, and use it for the opening of Scripture by means of this Book of Revelation, I do brave the scorn of being esteemed a fanciful and ingenious enthusiast, who hunts for curious coincidences to amuse his fancy withal. Verily, if preachers of the gospel will not be at pains to compare spiritual things with spiritual, they shall never discern the consistency, the beauty, and the unity of God's word. If, instead of explaining Scripture by Scripture, and wooing the Spirit by most patient and painful searching of the word, they will search for forms of argument and rhetoric, in order to make the small store of truth which they possess acceptable to the people, they may find thereby the unity of their own thoughts, and strengthen their own natural spirit whatever it be, and get for themselves a name of renown with men of natural understanding, good taste, and cultivated minds; but the glory of my God, and of His Christ, never, never by such methods shall they procure, nor their own souls attune to high and heavenly things, nor the various diversities of human character join and knit together into the body of Christ with bonds of loving unity, nor (shall I add it? I will add it with fear and trembling, not in judgment, but in love for my brethren's souls,) shall they be able to render an account of their stewardship unto Him who sent us to testify of Himself, and of nothing besides, even as He also testified only of the Father. Many will say, Why these digressions to the state of the Church and the state of the ministry? My answer is, I cannot help it. Out of the fulness of a loving heart I speak, deep-seated convictions I utter. The time is short; I look daily for my Lord, and I wish to leave my testimony behind me.

The next feature of the vision is one of great importance, and to which I enter with an earnest prayer to be enabled to speak the truth: "And He had in His right hand seven stars." Rightly to unfold this symbol will require of us a twofold inquiry: first into the meaning of the stars themselves; and, secondly, of their being in His right hand. Now, with respect to the first of these questions, we have this information in verse 20: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, ... the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." With respect to the number seven, we have nothing to add to what hath been said in this and the preceding lectures; that it is to signify all the ministers, as the seven churches doth signify all the churches. All that then were, and all that were to be thereafter; all that now are, and that are to be hereafter, while the ordinance of a ministry continueth, and the number of the

elect is accomplished, and the new covenant introduced, under which "they shall no more teach every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord; but they shall all know Him, from the least even unto the greatest." And what is that office? and who that office-bearer, which is thus represented by the symbol of a Star, and interpreted by the name of an Angel? The word Angel, is a Messenger; and the word Evangel, or Gospel, is the good message; and the word Evangelist, is the good Messenger. Ofttimes in the Old Testament is Christ called the Angel or Messenger of the Covenant; for example, Zech. iii. 1: "And the Lord (Jehovah) whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." Ofttimes in His discourses doth Jesus claim to be the Angel, or sent one, of the Lord: "Neither came I of myself, but God sent me; he that sent me is with me." "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." "The Father that sent me beareth witness of me," (John viii.) And again, (John x. 36,) "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" And the substance of all faith is made to stand in this, "They have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me," (John xvii. 8.) Now in that same discourse He doth declare, that in the same sense in which He was the Angel, or Sent One, of the Father, His apostles and those who should stand in their room, were His angels or sent ones. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world," (ver. 18.) And indeed the word Apostle meaneth no more than one sent from another: therefore also doth Paul take unto the Christian ministry the title of ambassadors for Christ from God, in whose beseeching God besought, who stood in Christ's stead entreating men to be reconciled to God; and taking them under the similitude of stars or lights, we have Christ denominating Himself in one place the Light of the world, and in another place giving the same denomination, saying, "Ye are the light of the world:" He containing the fulness of the light which is inaccessible and full of glory; and so bearing it up, and representing it to us, as that we shall be able to receive, and to reflect it upon others. Likewise the Holy Spirit, whose ministers we are, doth not take anything save of Christ's, and show it unto our souls. So that the more faithful and gifted a minister is, the more entirely is he a messenger of Christ. Now it is a messenger's office to report a message. He is the bearer and the utterer of a word. It is not an act, but a word that constitutes a messenger. A messenger is not he who carries into effect, but he who declares what another desires to be believed, and haply also to be carried

into effect. These considerations do lead us at once to the conclusion, that the angel of a Church is he who bears the message of Christ thereunto; he who speaks in the name of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ; he who preaches unto that Church the glad tidings of salvation. This accordingly is the interpretation which all sound commentators give of the name Angel of the Church. A man he is manifestly, from the things for which he is approved or censured in these several epistles;—a man who owned no superior in the Church of which he was angel, but was himself supreme over it, seeing upon him, as upon one who had the power, falleth all the blame of any disorder or transgression in the Church. I mean, he has no spiritual superior upon earth, and none in heaven save the Lord Jesus Christ. For if he had deferred to any other, or been in any way under the authority of another, then, surely, that other would have been spoken to with approbation or with censure, whereas there is not a hint of any such co-ordinate or superior power to the angel in any of the seven churches. And to this conclusion we are likewise drawn by the place these stars occupy, which is the right hand of the Head of the Church: side by side they lie there in co-equal and co-ordinate rank and dignity. Nor is there a hint in all the epistles of any superiority which one possesseth over another. Equally near are they, and equally dear unto the Angel of the Father. There is no difference, except that which ariseth out of their greater or lesser faithfulness to that one office with which they are invested.

Now this is a most important observation, to which I call the attention of the Church, as casting a most steady and glorious light upon the office of a minister of the word. If, as we have shown, the essence, the only meaning indeed, of the name Angel standeth in his being the person who delivers the message of Christ unto the Church, then most clearly is the person who is invested with this prerogative the chief responsible person, and, as it were, the head of that particular Church, under the Lord Jesus Christ, lying in His right hand, hearing His word, and repeating it to the people. I do not say that there ought not to be councils in the Church, whereby the government and discipline of the Church may be administered. God forbid! I believe the orders of presbyter and deacon to be of divine appointment, and that the presbyter or elder is indifferently denominated also bishop or overseer, whose office is to give himself to the pastoral care of the flock. I believe that there is no difference between the pastoral care of a bishop, and the pastoral care of an elder or priest. So far as the watchful cure of souls is concerned, I believe bishops and priests, as we say, ministers and elders, to be alike responsible unto our common Head. I believe furthermore,

that any difference in this respect which hath crept into the Church is an innovation, a burdensome and evil innovation. But while thus I most firmly believe I do see another dignity, and a higher one, another responsibility, and a larger one, which appertains to him who is appointed to minister the gospel, to be Christ's mouth unto the Church. He is the angel of the Church in right of that very ministry, and every Church ought to have such an one; and there is no intimation that it should have more than one such. Herein, therefore, standeth our superiority to the eldership; even in this, that upon the minister of the word there is superinduced, if he be already an elder, a new office, function, and dignity altogether. It is not by deprivation of the elder's dignity; it is not by an oversight of a different and higher kind than theirs; but it is by a new function in the house of God, to which they have neither call nor orders, that the minister of the word taketh precedency of them. As a minister of the word, he instructs them, the deacons also, and all the Church; and they, the deacons also, and all the Church, ought to hear him as the angel of Christ, who is the angel of God. But when he acteth in the capacity of a bishop or elder merely taking oversight, he hath no precedence in their councils of such a kind as to impose a negative, or to weigh further with his judgment than any of them do.

I have reflected much upon this subject: and I have, likewise, discoursed much of it to divines of both the Churches established in this land. And to me, and likewise to others, it hath yielded no small consolation, and afforded no small strength, to see our office as ministers of the word so distinctly defined as it is in this vision. For, as hath been argued many times, this vision is essentially universal as respecteth both time and place. Those who make so much of the apostolical age, and the extraordinary gifts, can have no argument here, where all the apostles, all the seventy, and all the deacons may well be supposed to have been no more. But what is universal is universal; and I will not allow one jot of this vision to be cast in any narrower mould. Whatever dignity, therefore, a minister in the Church of Scotland claims over the elders thereof; whatever dignity a bishop in the Church of England claims over the priests thereof; whatever dignity any man, in any Church, claims over those in whose hands the care of watchmen is given,—that dignity he hath in no other right than as a minister of the word; and I do utterly reject the discipline of those churches which consider that the office of an elder entitles him to minister the word. It is the radical error of the Independent scheme of Church government, to give men, in right of elders, the right of ministers, which is, in fact, to do away with the ministerial office altogether. And methinks it

may be seen in the character of their ministry, which hath almost no knowledge of doctrine beyond what is necessary for an elder's office, —that is, exhortation and admonition.

I observe, further, that there were many elders and many deacons in the churches which the apostles planted. But in none of the churches addressed by our Lord, doth there seem to have been more than one in whose mouth was the word of doctrine. And long after this, or, at least, some time after it, in those canons called apostolic, which are considered of most authority in the Church, and, most likely, reach near to the apostolical times, it is a crime of the highest penalty for any presbyter or elder to take upon him to minister the word, or set up another altar within the diocese of him who was already appointed to that dignity. For example, if any of the elders of the Church of Ephesus, of whom there were many in Paul's time, and, it is likely, not fewer in John's, had taken upon him the office of him who is called angel, he is, by the apostolical canons, sentenced to excommunication, with every one who did adhere to him.—I consider all the conclusions concerning the Church, which we may be able to derive from this vision as the more valuable on two accounts. First, because, at the time the vision was given, the Church was not taking, but had taken, form; had been proved with heresies and schisms manifold; and, therefore, we may well believe that the state of things spoken of in these churches is consistent with that ordinance which the Lord intended to continue. Secondly, because this vision was intended to instruct not the seven churches and the seven ministers, but all the churches and all the ministers of Christendom. On this account, as being posterior in time, but still more as being universal in purpose, and further on in the progress of revelation, I am not at pains to confirm the lessons which it teacheth from the other apostolical writings. But it is manifest from the very constitution of the Church, and the ordination of elders and deacons at the hand of those who preached the doctrine, as Timothy and Titus, that the dignity and nobility of office, and that from which the others emanate, doth go with the preaching of the word. I find, also, the distinction taken amongst the elders (1 Tim. v. 17) in these words: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine," where place of superior eminence is given on this very account. I find, also, in the Second Epistle of Timothy, a particular instruction given with respect to the office of teaching distinct from those given with respect to the office of bishop and deacon: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others

also." But the thing needeth not confirmation. There was an angel, and only one, in each of those seven Churches, in whom the Church is looked upon as represented, in whose person it is spoken to with words of judgment. Now this is enough to teach me that it should be so in every Church, in every city, and in every town, where Christians gather together to hear the word, and to receive the sacraments, and to keep the other ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." The sword is in all countries the symbol of the office of the magistrate or judge, who have it on solemn occasions carried before them. To this, distinct reference is made by the Apostle Paul, (Rom. xiii. 4:) "He (the ruler or power) is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for He beareth not the sword in vain: for He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." As such a minister of God, as the great revenger, into whose hands God hath committed the execution of His judgments, the Son of man is here set forth with the symbol of the sword. The Father doth reveal Him to us as the great Vindicator of His righteous and holy government, who shall yet come "in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," (2 Thess. i. 8, 9.) This much is expressed by the sword, without any respect to the position which is given to it of proceeding out of His mouth. The radical meaning of the symbol, is power going forth in acts of righteous severity. There is no civilised nation which doth not know what is meant by *the power of the sword.* It cannot be misinterpreted by any man of common sense and common knowledge. Nothing but the blindness of a sect or school can turn it out of this meaning into the very opposite meaning of grace and mercy in the preaching of the gospel. And yet such a fast hold have the false hopes of converting the whole world and bringing about the millennium by preaching taken of men's minds, that, with the greatest coolness and indifference, they do so misinterpret this symbol; which ariseth not merely from great ignorance of, and daring liberties with, the word of God, but chiefly from a low and inadequate view of the purpose of God, and of the office of Christ; which, they think, consist not well with any great stroke of judgment upon the wicked, but standeth in a gradual enlightening of the whole world with the beams of His grace and truth. But what and if the whole world should reject the light of the beams of the gracious Sun of Righteousness? Is not this the condemnation? And is this con-

demnation to issue also in grace? It is to issue in the revenge of Him, who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." They virtually deny a judgment of the quick who thus think. For the judgment of the quick is another and a different mystery from the judgment of the dead. But without going about to spend our time in endeavouring to undeceive those who love to be deceived, and would fain have it to be as they desire, instead of seeking to desire only God's revealed will, I refer to the two instances in which Christ presents Himself with this sword, acting, or about to act, towards the Church. The one is to the Church of Pergamos, (Rev. ii. 12,) to which writing He taketh to Himself no other title whatever but this one, "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." And in the charge to the angel of that Church He thus proposeth to use it, (ver. 16,) "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Now, I ask any man of common sense, if this can mean anything but a threatening of judgment? Can it mean, that if they did not repent, He would come and preach the gospel and convert them? Such liberties to take with the word of God, is the most terrible of all profanations. I dare not be guilty of it. I dare not overlook it. I dare not but rebuke it.—The other instance when Christ presents Himself acting with this sword, is in the destruction of the apostate kings, and the apostate ministers of Christendom: when He is coming against them and their armies, accompanied with the glorious company of His saints, it is written, (Rev. xix. 15,) "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Here are three symbols to express the same or kindred actings of one mood of the Godhead, the mood of wrath; of one office of Christ, the office of executing that wrath. The one of these symbols is the sword from His mouth, of which the effect is to smite the nations; and the nature of this smiting is thus described, (ver. 21,) "And the remnant was slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." I know that this can be misinterpreted into an act of mercy and grace; because I know men who do so misinterpret it, and men and ministers whom I believe to be orthodox and evangelical: but how they dare to do it, is what I cannot understand; for the words are the strongest possible to express consuming wrath, and they are the part of an action, of which the other part is "to cast the beast and the false prophet alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

These being the heads of the confederate against God and His anointed, have therefore the sorest judgment; the kings who gave their power to the united apostasies of infidelity and papacy, have their lives taken from them, and lie in their graves till the resurrection of the dead after the millennium; but the others have their portion in the lake of fire before it, and feel during all that while the torments and the tortures of hell, which even Satan knoweth not till after the thousand years are fulfilled.—The second symbol by which this action of the sword is expressed, is the iron rod: "He shall rule with a rod of iron:" and what the import and effect of this is, we have written in the second Psalm, from which it is taken. In that wonderful Psalm, the same confederation of the might, and dominion, and warlike prowess of the earth against God and His anointed, is set forth; and the Son is sent out against it; and what ensueth? "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Can any similitude so describe the whole institution of power and priesthood, of Church and state subverted for ever, irreparably broken, as a potter's vessel dashed upon the ground and shivered to pieces which can by no means whatever be repaired again or turned to any use whatever? Observe also the kind of exhortation founded upon this prediction, and addressed to the kings and judges of the earth. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."—Now, that it is wrath which He cometh to execute with that sword of judgment and sceptre of iron, is expressly declared in the third of the symbols, which are used to express this action: "And He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." What this means, and with what effects attended, is set forth to us in these words, (Rev. xiv. 19, 20,) "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." I do not anticipate the matter by entering particularly into the exposition of their symbols, but merely transcribe them to show what is the action thus variously set forth by "the sword of the mouth," "the rod of iron," and "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." I am very patient, and some may think tedious; but I am very desirous to convince my brethren, both ministers and people, that there is an act of terrible judgment coming upon Christendom, to be done and

executed by Christ, whereof the symbol is "the sword which proceedeth out of His mouth." For I feel every night as if I should not see the morning: so near do I think and hope His coming to be, for the redemption of His people from these snares of Satan, which are on every hand of us.

Having thus satisfied every one, as I trust, that the radical meaning of this symbol is "execution of righteous judgment," I now proceed to explain wherefore it proceedeth out of His mouth, and is not placed in His right hand. Of this we have the exposition in the 49th chapter of Isaiah, from which the symbol is manifestly taken. In the way of a proclamation, Christ thus issueth His word to the isles and peoples afar upon the earth, (ver. 1–3,) "Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me, and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Now what can the expression "hath made my mouth like a sharp sword" mean, but that the words of His mouth could not by any means be resisted, but were sharp and powerful as the sword of a mighty man. It is an usual thing to give this similitude for the word of God. (Eph. vi. 17,) "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Heb. iv. 12,) "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." This attribute of the word of God to carry its own sharp execution into all regions, visible and invisible, of creation, is here given to Israel, which being interpreted is, "the Prince of God," not the son of Isaac, but "Him in whom God is to be glorified," Him, who, after wrestling with His Father's strength put forth against Him all the night, doth in the morning receive the name of Israel, or Prince of God. Jacob was His name while serving for His wife, and bearing all extremes of ill: but Israel is His name when, having redeemed her, He entereth into the presence of God, and is crowned King and Priest, Lord and Christ. Then a dialogue commenceth between the Father and the Son, and runneth on through the whole chapter unto the conclusion of it, which is in these words; "I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the mighty One of Jacob." This is the action for which "Israel's mouth was

made like a sharp sword," and until the time of which He was hidden in the shadow of God's hand during this time of His absence. But when He shall be no longer hidden but revealed, then shall He come forth as the arrow of the Lord from the quiver, in which He is now hid. There is another prophecy in Isaiah, which doubtless referreth to the same final catastrophe, and which for its language might be characterised as the prophecy of the sword of the Lord. It is in the 34th chapter, and is likewise addressed or proclaimed abroad to all nations, verses 4 and 5: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to judgment." That it refers to the same conclusive event of the seventh seal is manifest, as well from the quotation of the fourth verse under the sixth seal, which ushereth in the seventh, (Rev. vi. 12, 13;) and by the treading of the winepress which is in Bozrah, (Isa. lxiii. 1,) and by the sword of the Lord being bathed in the blood of the mighty ones of the earth. This chapter furnisheth, moreover, a key to the nature of the judgment which is to fall upon the territories of Rome, into which, however, we enter not at present; except to refer our readers to it for the fate of Idumea and Edom, with this intimation that under that name Rome is signified, as indeed the Jews have always believed, and also the few students of prophecy which there are among Christians.

If the sword which destroys and devours the enemies of the Lord proceed out of His mouth, it may be asked what is meant by Psalm cxlix. ver. 5–9: "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord." The difficulty consists in this, that here the saints are represented with the sharp two-edged sword in their right hand. Now it is not to be doubted that as He rules the nations in that day, His saints also rule them: for in the same language in which His Father gives Him the dominion, doth He give the same dominion to us, (Psalm ii. compare with Rev. ii. 27.) If then He is not to draw the sword with His right hand, but speak slaughter with the breath of His mouth, we also, in like manner, under Him should act: being that arrowy lightning, those whirlwinds and tempests, the ministers of His word to fulfil it: not then as at Sinai;

for at Sinai He was served by the angels, then by His saints. And accordingly we find that in the emblematical vision, (Rev. xix.,) when He and they come out on this high emprise, they are arrayed in like wise with Him, only that they have no sword in their right hand, or proceeding out of their mouth: the only weapon of battle amongst them all being the chilling breath of the lips of the *Word* of God. And how then is this to be reconciled with the passage quoted from the 149th Psalm? By remembering this great canon of prophetical interpretation, that while the letter of it is fulfilled by the Jewish people, the spirit of it is fulfilled by the spiritual people of the Lord: they in the visible and apparent, we in the spiritual and real, are the fulfillers of the prophecy. To them I believe it is reserved in that day to arm against the apostate enemies of the Lord, and do exploits: to them is it reserved to bind the kings of the heathen with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. The Lord shall yet bend Judah and fill the bow with Ephraim, and raise up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece. The tribes shall yet be the battle-axe of the Lord, and His weapons of war. But while this slaughter of the apostate nations is proceeding, I believe it will proceed under the banner and ensign of the Son of man, who with His risen saints will manifest Himself in the cloud; He, enthroned upon the cherubim which is His glorified saints, shall appear at the head, and shall fight for them as heretofore He did against the Egyptians and the Canaanites: so that while the Jews stoutly and bravely under the leading of his banner achieve the victory, we shall serve the Lord Christ in being to them for a spirit of victory, and to their enemies for a spirit of confusion, and in many other ways which to the resurrection body may be easy and possible, yea, and proper, though as yet we know nothing of it. In this way will all the prophecy be harmoniously fulfilled.

This then is the sum of the matter with respect to the sword proceeding out of His mouth. The sword with two edges is the symbol of judgment, and execution of judgment; and being used against the Church, is the symbol of discipline,—for all the judgment in the Church, is discipline of love. Therefore it is said, (ver. 16,) "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them (that is, these heretical persons) with the sword of my mouth." It is called the sword of His mouth, because it is the word of His mouth. His word being sharper than any two-edged sword. By revealing Himself to the Church under this symbol, He teacheth two things: first, that He is not only a physician to heal, but likewise a chirurgeon to cut of; that He useth not only the balm of healing, but likewise the knife of excision; that He suffereth no

unholiness in His house, according as it is written, Psalm ci., "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off; he that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord." This office, as Bishop of His Church, He early put in force against Ananias and Sapphira. Paul required it to be put in force against the incestuous person in the Corinthian Church, and the Lord threateneth it against the heretical and impure persons in the Church of Pergamos; and we may no more doubt that this is a standing office of our great Bishop, and a constant experience of His Church, than we may doubt of the other aspect of His episcopacy already mentioned. The second thing which we learn from this character of our great Bishop is, that He useth not, He serveth Himself not with the civil sword, but only with the sword of His mouth. He, as Head of the Church, standeth not in need of help from the civil sword: His word is sufficient to execute itself; but that pestilent usurper of the universal episcopate, the Pope of Rome, took upon himself to use the civil sword, and brought it to pass, by his enchantments, and sorceries, and witchcrafts, that when he had pronounced any one a heretic, the kings of the earth should draw the sword against him. But we Protestant Churches hold other doctrine, rightly believing the sword of the Church to lie in the word that proceedeth out of her mouth. We cut off by the sentence of excommunication; and we neither ask, nor expect, that the state should thereupon inflict any punishment. But if the state, ordering itself according to divine laws, should say, No one shall fulfil the office of a magistrate, or be capable of any preferment under the crown, whom the Church hath cut off from the body of Christ, then what is that to us, who are bound to be in subjection unto the state, and not to subject it? That state, which doth so determine, doth so in reverence of Christ, the Head of kings, and that state which doth otherwise determine, doth it upon her responsibility to Christ the King. We meddle not otherwise than as preachers of God's verity, to instruct all ranks, and make intercession for all men. Contemplate, then, O my brethren, Him who holdeth the angels of the churches in His right hand, and walketh among the churches, "who is the first and the last, who was dead and is alive again;" Him contemplate, as the Judge in His Church, as well as the Saviour of His Church. Him contemplate as continually exercising discipline, as well as preaching salvation; as cutting off apostates, as well as introducing new believers into His Church.

"And His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength."

Both in the Old and in the New Testament, Messiah is represented as the light and glory of His people: "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel." This He was in a moral and spiritual sense, when He appeared as the Prophet of God in the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, wherefore these words of the prophet Isaiah, (ix. 2,) are applied to him by the Holy Ghost. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." And by the prophet Malachi He is denominated the Sun of Righteousness, without whom, as He Himself declareth, the world walketh in darkness. Nevertheless, His countenance was dull during the days of His flesh, as the countenance of another man, so as by no external marks to be distinguished. But when He would show unto His disciples, Peter and James and John, the Son of man coming in His kingdom, and was transfigured before them, (Matt. xvii. 3,) "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light;" and when He appeared to St Paul, (Acts xxvi. 13,) "it was with a light above the brightness of the sun." And again, when He appears to our seer, "His countenance is as the sun shineth in His strength." And when He comes to take possession of His purchased dominion, (Rev. x. 1,) "His face was as it were the sun," which all answereth to the description of His coming (Ps. xviii. 12;) "at the brightness that was before Him His thick clouds passed:" and in one word, this majestic presence with which He shall appear, is what is meant in Scripture by His coming in His glory; and in that better condition of the world which is described, (Rev. xxi. 22;) it is said, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their honour and glory into it." Now in my opinion Christ did not take that glorious appearance on Mount Tabor, and elsewhere, for the purpose of amazing and astounding the beholders, but for the very purpose of showing them in what aspect and appearance He was to come again; and I have high warrant for so opining. The Apostle Peter, in his Second Epistle, willing to assure the Church that the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ which he preached, was not a fable cunningly devised, but a real and literal truth of eye-sight, doth thus write, (i. 16,)—"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty: for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This

is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Now I ask, what is the apostle reasoning about in this passage? About the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is he reasoning? And how reasoneth he? He asserteth that it is not a fiction but a reality. And why a reality? Because they had been eye-witnesses of it. The whole force of his argument resteth upon this very thing, that what they saw in the mount was the reality of that personal presence in which Christ is to come again. I hold it therefore for certain, that Christ will be not only morally but physically, not only figuratively but literally, the light of the New Jerusalem. If any one be shocked with the sensuousness (if I may use that word, to avoid the figurative application of sensuality) of this notion, he will be pleased to reflect a little, and to take one or two things into consideration. First, Christ did so appear on the mount of transfiguration, and whenever after His resurrection He did appear: secondly, God is always said to dwell in light that is inaccessible, and full of glory; thirdly, the great type of the New Jerusalem, which is the most holy place of the tabernacle, was lighted with no material light of the sun, nor of the holy lamp, but with the light which proceeded from between the cherubim; a light without a cause, but the First Cause; the light of God's own glorious presence; and I ask, what signifies this, that there should be a portion of space from which all light was excluded, save the light of God's own presence? It doth signify that there is to be a portion of space in the world to come, which shall not otherwise be enlightened? And what place is that? Where God maketh His tabernacle. And what place is that? The New Jerusalem, which cometh down from heaven, over which, as it descendeth, this word is pronounced, (Rev. xxi. 3,) "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." But God seen is Christ, in whom alone He is visible. Therefore, I say again, that as truly as the holy place of the tabernacle was enlightened with God's presence between the cherubim, so truly shall the New Jerusalem that cometh down from heaven be enlightened by His dwelling in the midst of His saints, who shall every one of them be arrayed in His glory; and, in token hereof, when He showed Himself to John, His countenance radiates forth like the sun shining in his strength. How sublimely is this expressed in the anticipative prayer of Habakkuk, (iii. 3,)—"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had

horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting."

I have quoted the whole of this sublime passage, because of its wonderful parallelism with the vision before us, in many other points besides the brightness of His countenance. For example, the horns proceeding out of His hand, where is the hiding of His power, I conceive to be parallel with the seven stars in His right hand, unto whom He hath committed the dominion of His Church, and through whose faithful testimony the earth is smitten, as heretofore Jerusalem was destroyed by the word of Ezekiel, (xliii. 3.) And the coals of fire which went forth at His feet are parallel with His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. And the destruction of pestilence and earthquake that went before Him is parallel with that sword of power proceeding out of His mouth, whose effect is to judge the earth like that flying roll, which the Prophet Zechariah saw, (v. 1–5.)

Such, then, is the complete portraiture of the likeness of the Son of man; the great, the only universal Bishop of His Church, whose majestic lineaments and mighty powers when I survey I am lost in adoration of that goodness and grace, and power and might, which lie reponed by the Father in His person. I see Him no longer as the man of sorrows, who through weakness was crucified and laid in the grave; but I do see Him as the Lord and Christ, whom God hath seated in His own throne, that the knees of creation might bow before His feet, and the tongues of creation might confess before His all-knowing and all-gracious mind. What see I, in this majestic vision, in this prolific symbol in this Divine hieroglyphic? I see the Godhead of the Son unhumbled, unalloyed by His manhood; yea, but I see the Godhead of the Son, and the manhood too, being of the Christ, set up highest; and the Godhead of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, in their personalities, doing all their diligence to bring creation under His feet, and to bow every lofty neck to His obedience, unto the end that His dignity might be asserted against power, and it might be known what humiliation He voluntarily underwent heretofore, and what humiliation He for ever undergoes, by consenting to be in subjection to the Father, when He shall sit on David's throne, and from the throne of David rule the created worlds. I say humiliation this, in comparison with that glory which He now hath with the Father, seated in His throne, and which He had before the world was; exaltation, however, when compared with His

past humiliation: exaltation when compared with everything out of God, for of the things out of God He reigneth King-Priest. There is a time coming, when Godhead shall be all in all, (1 Cor. xv. 28.) That time is not yet, for at present the God-manhood of Christ is all in all, being the end of the Father's rule and government: "Sit on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." But the time is coming, when, from that throne, Jesus Christ shall descend into that station of subjection to occupy which the person of the Son contracted Himself to creature bounds, in which, for ever acting, He shall teach and empower a redeemed and blessed universe to worship Godhead, invisible and incomprehensible, standing in the person of the Father; in which Godhead, His own Godhead, and the Holy Ghost's Godhead, and the Father's Godhead, are alike worshipped. But it is improper language to speak of the Father's Godhead, of the Son's Godhead, or the Godhead of the Holy Ghost: for Godhead is not divided, though in separate subsistences. O glorious mystery of the Trinity, basis of all truth, preservative of all worship, ground of all redemption, stability of all blessedness! Let me live to defend, let me die to confirm, let me live for ever to enjoy, the knowledge of Godhead in the Father worshipped apart, of Godhead in the Son living and sustaining me and a redeemed world, apart from the worshipped Father; of Godhead in the Holy Ghost, quickening with all holy and blessed life me and the redeemed world, yet in due subordination, and far distance from the Head, Christ; as distinct from Him as the personality of the Holy Ghost is from the personality of the Son.—For the further unfolding of the three personalities in the Godhead, I must wait till I come to the 21st verse of the 3d chapter, which will draw on with it a full explanation of the mystery contained in the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, concerning the eternal subjection of the Son; and, in the meantime, I refer my readers to the last of my sermons on the subject of the Incarnation.

Subjects these little heeded and little cared for, and much contemned by this self and not God worshipping generation; and nowhere more contemned than amongst the ministers of my own Church, for whom I chiefly write. I hide it not, that, though I write primarily for the glory of God in the exposition of His truth, and secondarily for the good of all His intelligent creatures, I have an especial love to my brethren, the ministers of the Church of Scotland, who, by the intellectualism and base philosophy of our great Northern University, have been much seduced from the faith of the fulness of God's word, into the faith of only those forms of it which can be commended to the natural man, and obtain the approbation of men of sense and talent, with whom our country abounds. I am

striking another chord altogether; it jars in the ear of the rest of my brethren; but it is the chord which alone will recall the deep symphonies of the soul with God. And while I write, I feel the strong assurance that God will give these truths power and efficacy in the heart, and in the ministry, of many of my brethren in the Church of Scotland, who now look upon me as revolting men of sense from the whole subject of religion. Listen to me, my brethren, and I will tell you a truth: These men of sense, professors, reviewers, scientific men, and so forth, must be repelled from that which they now call religion, before they can be attracted to that which you know to be religion. The clear sky over the head of Scotland's intellect must be beclouded and bedimmed with vapours before the soil of Scotland's intellect will yield you any fruit of that kind, which heretofore it brought forth in all abundance. Teach, O ye men of God! to these sciolists, what true knowledge and true wisdom are; take these boasters into deeper waters if ye would teach them how to swim, and when they find themselves beyond their depth, they may haply betake themselves to the ark of salvation. I am not boasting of myself over others, but I am boasting in the truth. I say Christ is the truth, and all out of Him is a lie. I say the man that is in Christ, is in the truth; and all out of Him are in a lie. I say Christ is right reason, and true intellect; and that all who know Him not are but bastards, and mockers, and no children of reason, or even of intellect. Oh, tell, tell them so, ye watchmen in the cities, on the walls, and around the bulwarks of our Zion!

This vision of the glory of the Son of man overwhelmed the seer with astonishment, and absorbed all his faculties of thought and action, and he fell at his feet as dead. Methinks had he not been in the Spirit, and by the Spirit sustained, such a vision starting into life at one's right hand, and with a trumpet voice uttering such mighty words, in the solitude of a sequestered place of banishment, might have extinguished life altogether. There is an awe of a spiritual appearance which is indescribable. Job's friend, who saw such an apparition, says that the hair of his flesh stood up. Daniel, who feared not the wrath of a king, nor the lion's den, when he saw such a vision was left without strength remaining in him. So also Ezekiel, and indeed all the persons in the Old Testament who were favoured with such apparitions from the invisible world. Whence this dread should arise, is not an inquiry for the divine so much as the philosopher. To say that it ariseth from its being supernatural, is not altogether to explain the difficulty; for we do not find that the supernatural actings of our Lord and His apostles wrought any such terror upon the bye-standers and His apostles.

But these supernatural works were expected and besought, and brought to pass by the instrumentality of one like ourselves, whereas these without any preparation, and without any instrumental cause, came in an instant into being. I think, for my own part, there is impressed upon our mind, by the hand of God, the awe and dread of a spiritual world, as the basis of the reverence of God as a Spirit. God, who is the Father of spirits, in order as it were to confirm our reverence of Himself, hath grounded us in the common reverence of a spiritual world. It may perhaps likewise be by him permitted to pass into slavish dread for a remembrance of that captivity in which we have been, since the Fall, to the prince of fallen spirits; and a warning to the wicked of the fearful mastery which he shall have over them in the world to come. However it may be, no one will doubt that this instinctive dread of the spiritual world doth betoken in man a deep and mysterious and awful connexion therewith, and forms the basis of a religion, either of terror or of consolation, according to the tidings which are brought to us, concerning the spirits and the Father of the spirits who inhabit there. Now, as in all cases of intercourse between demons and men, the effect hath been grief, and torture, and death, to the poor mortal whom they got possession of; so, on the other hand, in all cases of intercourse between God and man, through angelic or divine appearances, the contrary effect hath ever been experienced of kindness, comfort, good news, and gracious gifts. By which difference in the actings towards man, of the fallen and the unfallen, of the apostate and the elect spirits, is given to us a foretaste of that society, bitter or sweet, miserable or blessed, which we shall enjoy in the spiritual world, of which we are the denizens, between death and the resurrection. Those wanderings and distractions of mind, those rendings of natural affections, and tortures of conscience, and other forms of anguish, which the spirits of possessed men and children, mentioned in the gospel, were liable to, and which, perhaps, have their continuance amongst ourselves, in the various forms of madness, are a witness which God hath left amongst men, to warn them to flee from the bondage and oppression of Satan, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. While those friendly admonitions, timeous interpositions, gracious revelations, and blessed deliverances which God hath in all times by spiritual intervention sent unto His saints, are a most exhilarating encouragement for us to put away the slavish dread of spiritual agents, and look upon God as our Father, and all holy angels, as ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation. Of these angel visits, none so glorious and so consoling occurs in all the Scriptures, as this, which is now before us,

exhibiting our brother, in the style, dignity, and vestments of the Lord of glory, who, when the solitary exile to whom He condescended to appear, fell at His feet as dead, did most graciously lay His right hand upon him, saying unto him these wonderful words :—

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore; Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." These words which were spoken for his consolation, and to banish his fears, contain great depths of divine doctrine, as well as strong food of spiritual consolation; before entering upon which I would first make a remark upon the word "fear not," with which Christ first openeth His lips. The sword sharp and two-edged, proceeding from his mouth, might well excite fear in the breast of a sinful mortal. As Daniel's comeliness was turned into corruption when he saw the vision of this same glorious Person; so do I well believe the grace and the loveliness of John the Evangelist, would be turned into an overwhelming sense of vileness and wretchedness when he saw the vision of the Son of man. Oh, it is a fearful thing for flesh and blood to look upon God. If Paul said of himself, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" even when he was but looking on himself with the eye of his own conscience, how much more must our seer have felt, when searched with those Eyes like lamps of fire, and standing in that Presence which was like the sun shining in his strength! Most seasonable, therefore, was the word, Fear not. Great comfort, I doubt not, was conveyed by it, to the astonished and overwhelmed man. And oh what tenderness it bespeaks in Jesus Christ, thus to open the apocalypse of His glorious coming with these words, "fear not," the man speaks as it were above the God, or to express it truly, the God speaketh in and through the man. It is Jesus, the unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same Jesus upon whose bosom John leaned; the heavens have not changed Him, for even upon earth He was holy as the heavens. And well did these words, "fear not," become the lips of Him who came to deliver men, who, through the fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. He who had made peace by the blood of His cross, and taken away the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, between both and God; He who had preached that love which casteth out fear, might well begin His revelations from glory with the words "fear not." And methinks, moreover, they were suitable words for ushering in that series of revelation, which were to contain the fearful judgments, and consummated wrath of God, the strokes of chastisement, the earthquakes of destruction, the

throes of death to the present framework of this evil world; which, while we pursue in our meditations, and are not afraid to tell out the terrors thereof, let these words be ever in our ears, in the ears of all who read and who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein. To all such, the voice which spake them saith, Fear not. Fear not for thyself, O my servant; fear not for the Church. And shall we not respond in the words of the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Such, O God, let my spirit be, and such be the spirit of those who hear, while together we meditate with awe these dreadful visions of coming judgment.

"I am the first and the last."—In reflecting upon these words, since our last lecture, I have been led into somewhat deeper views of this expression, and of those which then passed under our consideration. The expressions, "the first and the last," "the beginning and the ending," we explained as signifying that the Son of God was by the Father, or, more correctly to speak, was by the Godhead, contemplated as the Christ, before time had a beginning, before the world was, and that the end for which things were created, and the laws under which they were created, do arise out of that contemplation and purpose of the Godhead, to bring into outward being the Christ, fulness of God, and blessedness of creation, which He purposed in Himself before the world was. And so Christ is before all things, and the end of all things: before all things, inasmuch as, to bring Him forth in His perfection was the purpose of God from eternity, the end of all things,—inasmuch as, when creation, under God's plastic finger, shall stand exhibited the fulness of Christ, there is its end, not its ending, as a subsistence, but its accomplishment as a structure, its perfection as a work of God, the ending indeed of its growth unto perfection; in which perfection it shall ever stand, bodying forth in the well-pleased sight of God His own complete purpose, and in itself feeling and enjoying the rich harmony, the sufficient provision, the perfect beauty, and the infallible strength which are essential to every idea and purpose of the mind of God. Now this is an exceeding great and precious truth; a doctrine it is, which, like a key, doth unlock the deep things of the word of God; and without which, I defy any divine, either to justify God in creation, or to defend the mystery of the Trinity, or to enjoy its inconceivable wealth of truth.

And yet, as I said above, large, yea, and vast as this idea is, to

which I gave utterance in my last lecture, and have now given repetition, it still lacketh something of the fulness of that which is expressed by the words, "I am the first and the last." It doth not satisfy the contradiction which is in these words, "I am the first and the last;" for a contradiction clearly there is: that which is the first cannot be the last, and that which is the last cannot be the first. So it is with the expression, "I am the beginning and the ending;" and the expression, "I am the Alpha and the Omega;" and, if I mistake not, the same intentional contradiction is contained in the name of the Father, and of Christ also, "which is, and which was, and which is to come;" for that which is present, cannot at the same time be past, and that which is present and past cannot at the same time be future. Wherein, then, consisteth the meaning of setting down an idea by contradictory terms? Because in this way, and in this way alone, can any idea be fully expressed, as hath been shown by Coleridge, that precious relict of the school of sages, in his "Aids to Reflection." It is of the essence of an idea that it should be of the reason, and not of the sense; and what is of the pure reason cannot be expressed in terms of the sense. But time and place are essential forms of the sense, either inward or outward, and therefore when you would express any idea with respect to time and place, the only resource you have is, when you have said one thing to contradict it by another. By so doing, you indicate whereabouts the thing you would express lies, and teach that it is not to be expressed under that category; and there you leave it for your reader to exercise his reason, and see if he can find the idea there. When the ancient sage was asked to define God, he did it by contradictory conceptions, saying, that he was a circle, all centre, without any circumference; thereby expressing the truth, that he was in all places, and beyond all place, and unlimited by place, (without circumference,) and yet not diffused, nor scattered over space, so as to be in parts, but all in every place, (all centre.) Such an idea also is the Trinity, and such an idea also is Eternity, and such ideas are contained in the expressions before us. For example, when it is said of God, "which is, and which was, and which is to come," it is asserted that He is all present in the present time, that He is all present in the past time, and that He is all present in the time to come; or, in other words, that there is no time when He is not all present, and therefore all unchangeable; that time or succession of existence is not an attribute of His; and if not of His, then also not of Christ's, unto whom the same title, "Which is, which was, and which is to come," is applied. Men are willing enough to acknowledge this truth of God, but few men apprehend it to be a truth also

of Christ. I mean not of Christ as God, but of Christ as Christ. And yet this is a fundamental truth, of which the Scriptures are more anxious to bear testimony than of the other. Now that same truth, in respect to order, is expressed by the words, "I am the first and the last." When it hath been said, *I am the first*, lest that should be misunderstood to mean, that He was only the first of things existent in the purpose of God, it is instantly added, *and the last;* and lest it should be understood, that He was only the one and the other, or both of these, they are joined together in one attribute, and, so joined, do signify that while His being included the whole series of succession, from first to last, it was not under the law of succession, but that He was the full Christ of God before the world was, before He was brought into the world of the virgin's seed, when He was of age, when He was a disembodied spirit and a dead body, as He is now, and as He shall be, when He comes again; and as He shall be for ever and ever; that is to say, that the Son, co-essential, co-eternal, consubstantial with the Father, very God of very God, did before creation assume unto Himself that limited form of the Christ, in which the Father saw before time, and independent of time, before change, and independent of change, His work complete in that beauty and perfectness to which it shall yet attain. And in this all-containing form of being, image of the invisible God, fulness of the Godhead, the Son did create and order creation to the end of His becoming flesh, did take flesh, did redeem it, did glorify it, and is now bringing all things to be under it, as it were the parts, dependencies, and drapery of His being. All things headed up in Him, both things in heaven and things in earth. There are apparent changes, as His taking flesh; but this is not a real change of His being as the Christ of God; that is to say, he who taketh flesh, is the very same whom God set up, before the world was, by whom God created the world, who spake by the prophets. No change did His spiritual being undergo, in these acts of creating the world, redeeming flesh and the world. His spiritual being is that fulness of Godhead, which was the device and the joy of Godhead, in the purpose, and in the enjoyment before the light was created, and before He set His compass on the deep. The rest is but the acting of the Son, thus limiting Himself, unto the end of bringing that form of being which He had assumed into outwardness from the Godhead itself; that is, into creation. While yet it was not outward, it was the delight of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all the same as it shall be, when it is outwardly complete. And creation, therefore, addeth nought to the enjoyment of God within Himself. It addeth not to His own essential glory; it is not for himself, but for the good

of the creatures that He creates. Creation, and redemption, and regeneration, are all actions of the goodness of God outwardly, unto the works of His hands.—Reader, whoever thou art, call not these things dreams which be the essential truths of Godhead and the bases of a creation.

"I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore; Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." It is thus in the original: "I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I became dead, and behold alive I am unto the ages of ages; Amen; and I have the keys of hades and of death." What then is meant by Christ's claiming to Himself the characteristic of the "living One"? To explain this, we must go to the Gospel and First Epistle of John; in the former of which it is thus written of the Word: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made; in Him was life, and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not;" and in the latter, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and which we have looked upon, and which our hands have handled of the word of life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness; and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)" So Christ saith of Himself, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."—These and such passages contain the same truth which is expressed in the words before us, "I am the living One." Now it is manifest to any one perusing them, that it is not His life in the days of His flesh that is spoken of. That was but "the manifestation of the life," which had a previous subsistence in Christ, which had an eternal subsistence in Him with the Father before it was shown unto us. The life here spoken of as appertaining unto Christ, is coeval with the creation of the world and the light of men; yea, and it is before them, being an attribute of that Word which was with God, and which was God, and the source out of which the light of men arose. Creation of the matter of the world was His first act; to give life in its various forms was the next; and in man that life grew into the "light of life," which, as we find it elsewhere used, doth signify the clear vision of truth and discernment of God. "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light," (John xii. 35.) And still more to the present purpose is it written, (John viii. 12,) "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the

light of life." The life and the light spoken of in these and other passages, is the eternal life which knoweth not death; the true light in which God is beheld, and obeyed, and enjoyed. This life which, in its several degrees, was communicated at creation, is declared to have been in Christ contained, before that beginning of events, out of Him to have come, and by Him to have been imparted.

Now it was one of the great ends of the Incarnation, to demonstrate that Christ had life in Himself: and, in general, it may be asserted, that the thing manifested in and by Jesus Christ, is not the original, but only the copy of that which was in Him from the beginning, according to the purpose of the Godhead. Incarnation and creation itself are but showings forth of that primordial and archetypal form of all existences, the Christ, the Beginning of the creation of God; not the Godhead, which is incomprehensible, but the Godhead brought into the comprehensible form of Christ. This I hold to be the very link which binds God and creation; even Godhead comprehensible in Christ. Now when it is said that the life was in Christ, or that He is the living One, it is so asserted of that former Being which the Son assumed before the world was, and in which He is to be manifested for ever and ever. But for Godhead, in the person of the Son, to assume a form of being is an act or work unto which all the persons must concur: the Father, as the purposer of it; the Son, as the person in it; the Holy Ghost, as the life of it: for these are the proper offices of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in every work of God. If, then, the Holy Ghost be the life of that form of being which before the world was, God set up in the person of Christ, we are given to understand by the expression, "I am the living One," that He, even Christ, possessed the Holy Ghost as His life, not in the Godhead, subsisting, but in the Christ subsisting. Christ, therefore, hath the Holy Ghost as life, all life whatever was in the Word, before it came forth into creation.—These are very deep truths, and being looked at heedlessly—indeed being otherwise looked at than with the greatest caution and consideration might lead some to suppose that we were advocating the heresy of a pre-existing humanity. It is not so. We believe the humanity had no existence until the Word became flesh; but we, withal, believe that the Christ is before all, not as a man, but as the person of the Son, sustaining that limited form of being: I mean, that the Son was the Christ of God, as a purpose, as a reality, before the world was; in whom, as in the fountain-head of being, God saw all forms of being that were to exist in their unity and harmony.

"I was dead, (I became dead,) and am alive, for evermore. Amen." He who had life within Himself from all eternity, He who

was made the depositary of all outward life before any creature was formed, became a dead person, to the intent of its being proved by God that He was the Prince and Author of life. Not to die as an end, but as a means of proving Him to be the very life, did He come into this mortal estate. If I were wishing to prove that one man alone, of many men, could accomplish some object, I would first exhibit all the rest foiled in attempting it: so God, in order to prove that Christ, and He alone, is the living One, doth permit the many living ones to come under the dominion of death; and having thus proved that no man is the living one, He then bringeth Christ into the same controversy with death, who, by overcoming it, doth prove Himself the Prince of life, and the Master of death. So that He could say, "I am the resurrection and the life." By being the resurrection, He is proved to be the life. He is not the life in consequence of the resurrection, but in antecedence of it. The resurrection proves Him to be that Being in whom it had pleased God that it should reside as in an invincible fortress, which was tried and proved to be death-proof. By becoming mortal, moreover, there was another great principle of the subsistence of the Christ established. The principle, to wit, that the Christ is not self-subsisting; but subsisteth upon and by the Father. The Son is self-subsisting; but upon becoming the Christ, He passeth out of that divine attribute, into the creature attribute of subsisting by the Father. Not that His Godhead is changed, or can be changed, without changing Godhead altogether. For Godhead, as hath been expressed, is not the property of one person, but the community of all the Persons of Godhead: and being fully preserved in the Father, the Son, in order to show what it is, unto the comprehension of intelligent creatures, doth drop all use and claim of it, condescending to become, and to be known, and to be spoken of, as that noblest form of creature, the Christ;—whose manner of subsistence, as connected with God, in order to exhibit, and thereby to exhibit the manner of the subsistence of all creatures, which are but the limbs of the same Christ in respect of God, He doth take unto Himself a body, that He may be seen, and handled, and reported of; and that all men may know the mystery of God, which was hid from the ages past, but is now revealed unto the Church. Now when Christ appeared within the intelligible and sensible world, under the conditions of mortality, He did, as it were, put Himself out of self-existing life in order to receive it again from the Father, that it might be seen and manifest, that in His form of Christ the Son liveth upon the Father, according as it is written in John vi., "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the

Father." Thus bringing Himself into the mortal, and denuding Himself of the life which was in Him reposed, as in the fountain-head, He did exhibit Himself receiving life from the Father, and using it for the Father, which appearance again is the very reality that had been from eternity, to wit: That the Son, as the Christ, is fed with life from the Father by the Holy Ghost, wherefore in the deeper divinity of a better age, Christ was wont to be called the Pleroma, or fulness, and the Holy Ghost the Vinculum Trinitatis, or bond of the Trinity. So that, did Christ heal a withered hand, He referred it to the Father; saying, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself." Did He raise Lazarus? It was through the answer of the Father to His faithful prayers. Is He raised from the dead? It is by the working of the mighty power of the Father of glory. And now that He sitteth and reigneth Lord of life, great Regenerator, second Adam, He doth refer the power which He hath received wholly to the gift of the Father; and in so doing doth teach the Godhead by showing it in action; doth give the basis of all morality, by showing the severity and the goodness of God; doth teach the way of redemption by treading it in His own person;—all which doctrine, with much more of a practical kind which I defer till the same expressions come before us in the Epistle to the Church in Smyrna, is taught us by these words, "I was dead, and am alive for evermore."

It doth only remain that I explain, "And have the keys of hell and death." The word translated "hell" is hades, which properly signifies the place of the separate souls. It certainly is not the lake that burneth, which is never represented as a prison in creation; but as a waste howling misery beyond the bounds of redeemed creation, from which there is no escape, and upon which, therefore, no key is placed; but otherwise with the place of the soul in its separate state, which is represented in many parts of Scripture as a place of safe keeping: the hell here spoken of is truly the place of separate spirits. Death is not merely the separation of soul and body; but, besides this, is the falling away of the body into corruption, and the retention of the soul in hades. That the body should corrupt, is not the whole of death: it is needful to add, that the soul goeth into hades to remain there for ever, unless a Redeemer shall be found; and the Redeemer, when He shall come, must not only be able to take the body from the grave, but likewise to take the soul from hades. He must have two keys; one able to unlock the grave, another able to unlock hades. Christ, when He would prove Himself greater than death, must go into the prison-house of death,

which is the grave; and His soul must go into the prison-place of the soul, which is hades: and having been thus fully certified as dead, He must by strength of hand, like Samson, come forth of Gaza, with the gates upon His shoulders. And this truly He did, for His soul having descended into hades, did thence come forth amain; ay, and bring a levy out along with Him, showing that He was master of that key, and then went He and took His body from the grave, and likewise the bodies of many other saints, proving that He was master of that key also; so that His complete death and His complete resurrection do indeed demonstrate that He hath the keys of hell and death. Lord He is of death, the captivity He hath led captive; and when the time cometh for Him to speak the word, death and hell will tremble and obey. Not a soul, not a body, but at His sovereign command shall come forth; some to the resurrection of life, some to the resurrection of judgment; and thus standeth Christ, gloriously manifested as the living One, of whom it was said of old, "O death, I will be thy plague: O grave, I will be thy destruction."—Such are, as they appear to me, the doctrines of this comfortable speech which our Shepherd spake to the petrified seer. The practical uses of them I postpone, until I meet them again in the course of the Epistles.

LECTURE IV.

CHRIST THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

REV. i. 19, 20.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

PART II.—HIS SEVEN EPISTLES.

(REV. i. ii. iii.)

THE vision of Christ, the High Priest of our profession, and the Great Shepherd of the sheep, which occupied our thoughts in the former lecture, is only the personification or portraiture of the writer of those seven epistles, to which our attention is now to be directed; and is not intended to be contemplated alone, but to be studied in connexion with what follows in the second and third chapters; being, as hath been already said, like the vignette with which the chapters of picturesque writings are wont to be introduced; or like the allegorical paintings with which legendary tales were wont to be emblazoned. I remember, when a youth, to have visited the cathedral church of St Mary's, in the city of Carlisle, and to have seen painted upon the walls of the porch the history of the temptations and triumph of some saint, I forget which,—perhaps St Anthony: and in each compartment of the piece, besides the significant personages in their appropriate attitudes and actions, there were words proceeding forth from their mouths for the fuller exposition of the subject. Such a succession of allegorical paintings is the revelation of Jesus Christ, given in this book. The first in order, is that which we have explained; the second is contained in the 4th and 5th chapters; the third, at the beginning of the 8th chapter; the fourth, at the beginning of the 10th chapter; and so on, unto the end. In the

porch or chapel of St Mary's, it was left to your own ingenuity, or the ingenuity of your guide, to give language and narrative to the succession of St Anthony's trials; but in this Book of the Revelation of the King of saints, the office of interpreting and applying the several parts of the allegorical representations is fulfilled by the same unerring wisdom which delineated them. And these explanations do constitute the chief parts of the prophecy. Yet are these explanations themselves generally allegorical, having a dependency upon, and subservience to, that particular manifestation of Jesus Christ under which they were written. Such an application of the points of these allegorical representations have we now to consider. But, first, it will be necessary to make a remark or two upon verses 19 and 20, which form the link of connexion between the vision and the application of the vision.

When, by the comfortable words of the Son of man, the seer had been awakened from his death-like entrancement of fear, he received this commandment from his Lord and Master, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." In these words the whole subject-matter of the writing of this book is divided into three parts, whereof the first is entitled, "What things thou sawest;" and we have, in the next verse, the things intended by the words, "What thou sawest." "The mystery of the seven stars *which thou sawest* in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches." The first integrant division of the book, therefore, denominated by these words, What thou sawest is the mystery of the seven stars, and the seven golden candlesticks. That this symbol of the ministers of the Church, and the churches, should have been raised into the importance of an integrant division of the book, doth better demonstrate than anything else the great consequence which the Lord assigneth to it, and doth well justify the large consideration which we gave to it in the former lectures; which, when I review in my thoughts, I feel to be utterly inadequate to the dignity of the subject. And I am constrained here, where an opportunity is given, to show additional reason why this mystery of the stars and candlesticks should be so exalted into a distinct division,—and that, the first divison of this book. The stars are, as is interpreted, the angels of the churches; which doth signify that person in each Church unto whom is committed the ministry of the word, the preaching of the everlasting gospel: of which personage the dignity is so great, and the office so essential, as to stand foremost in this revelation of Jesus Christ. And well is it entitled

to that pre-eminence, for without the ordinance of preaching, there would be no Church; and without a Church, there would be no Christian kingdom; and without a Christian Church and Christian kingdom, there would be no apostasy, no beast, no false prophet: so that the whole substance of this book, the whole drama of God's providence therein laid out towards Christendom, doth derive itself out of the office of the preacher of the word, the angel, the sent-one of Christ. If, again, we look at the dignity of this office, not so much in relation to the things contained in this book, as to its own intrinsic excellence and high prerogatives, we shall see it still the more to be admired. For what are the three supreme indefeasible and unchallengeable rights of Christ? These three: First, to be the word of God, through whom the invisible God must be communicated withal; secondly, to baptize with the Holy Ghost; unto which dignity the Baptist, than whom none born of a woman was greater, having respect did say, "I am not worthy to stoop down and to loose the latchet of His shoes;" in which prerogative of Christ standeth the quickening of everlasting life, in the mortal substance of every creature whom the Father hath chosen thereto: and the third of Christ's Divine dignities is, to feed the flock of the Father's elected and regenerated ones, with His flesh and His blood: from His seat on high to administer unto the Church that measure of the Holy Ghost which, in the days of His flesh, did avail to sanctify the body which He took. These are the three prerogatives of Christ,—to be the Word, the Baptist, and the Pastor, between God and His creatures. Who is the man on earth that doth, under Christ, administer these offices to the Church? A king? no. A judge? no. Who then? The ordained minister of a Church; to whom is committed the word of preaching, constituting us ambassadors for Christ; to whom is committed baptism, which is not by water only, but by water and the Spirit: for that man is a sacrilegious spoiler of God's ordinance, who doth separate the inward act of regeneration, from the outward act of washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to all who receive it by faith: to whom is committed the administration of the Lord's Supper, whereof the worthy receiver is made partaker of the body and blood of Christ, to his spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. If, then, it be the right of the Christian minister, or angel of the Church, to represent, by his office, these three highest dignities of Christ: then his place and station upon the earth is the most noble, and the most responsible: the most holy, and the most comprehensive; and is, therefore, well entitled to the precedency which it hath in this book.

Next, if this office be considered in relation to the churches,

then what less is it, than that out of which the very being of a Church ariseth? For the preaching of the word is the only ordinance for the conveyance of faith from the Father; and without believers, there can be no Church. And when there are believers drawn out by the preaching of the word, baptism is the only ordinance for the regeneration of a believer by the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby he becomes a Son of God: and the Lord's Supper is the only ordinance and means for the nourishment and edification of the faithful. From the office, therefore, and through the office of the minister of the word and sacraments, doth the very being of a Church proceed, in whom, accordingly, we shall find the Church always regarded by Christ as represented. High, therefore, very high, and very holy is his office in every respect. Holding from Christ, we hear Christ without any intercession of a middle party; and we speak what we hear to the Church committed to our charge. Such is the dignity of the ministerial calling, which Church government, in its several courts of presbytery, synod, and general assembly, or bishop, archbishop, and king in convocation, are not intended in the least to infringe; or if they do, they usurp it upon Christ, who hath a right to speak to the ministers who speak to His members without any intervention of a third party. These authorities of the Church are the collected authority of the several ministers gathered together into them; and not another power above and besides that of the minister. And this is the great danger of Episcopal superintendence, that it may give rise to the idea, that in a person above the minister of word and sacraments, there is reposed by Christ an authority and power of a higher order; which, be it lodged in king, pope, archbishop, or general assembly, is nothing else than an invasion of, and assumption upon Christ's proper and peculiar dignity as the only Head of the Church. When the ministry, already in possession of the gift, and in the daily exercise of it, and therefore able to recognise it in another, have sought for and recognised it in another, they signify the same by setting him over a flock by the laying on of hands. Where placed, he enters upon that dignity for which Christ, not they, did qualify him. They do not give the qualification, but they seek for one into whom Christ hath divided it by the Spirit: nor do they make the office, nor doth he hold it under them, but under Christ, for the ends set forth in His holy word. The less occasion they have to interfere with him the better; and it is only in case of his venting anything to destroy the unity of the truth, or the unity of the body of Christ, or walking contrary to the canons of the Church, that they step in with the exercise of that discipline and government which is reposed

in them. This dignity and prerogative have ministers of the word, not for their own sakes, but for promoting the great ends of God, in calling out from the world His own chosen people, and constituting them into a Church. And when churches have, by the faithful preaching of the word, been constituted, the purpose of God, in respect to the present visible condition of the Church is accomplished; and they are expected to hold on until the coming of the Lord. The seven stars, therefore, and the seven golden candlesticks, signifying all the ministers and all the churches, until Christ shall come again, is the symbol of a complete purpose of God, namely, His purpose by the Church; and as this purpose is the highest of all God's purposes, next to, or rather an integrant part of the Christ, it occupies deservedly the first place in this scheme or revelation of the purposes of God.

But the whole Church, both Christ the Head and all His members, are but as it were one great candlestick, for holding up unto a world lying in darkness the light of the knowledge of the living God, for which the world is responsible, and for the neglect of which the world shall be judged. There hence ariseth a third object upon our view, which is the world wherein the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks, have their abode. Now, the plantation of churches within any state or kingdom, is for the purpose of giving light to the rulers of that kingdom, that they may know God's method of government, and God's Head Governor; and knowing them, be guided by the one and render homage to the other; to teach kings how to rule under Christ, and subjects how to obey from conscience towards God: this is the great end of the Church with respect to the kingdom. And when the king and his estates have offered unto Christ their allegiance, which they do by being baptized in His name, thenceforth that kingdom is regarded by God as a Christian kingdom, whereof Christ is the invisible King; and it beginneth to be entreated by His Providence accordingly; they have honoured Christ and God will honour them. Unto a Christian kingdom it is not necessary that all the people should be Christians, nor even that they should all have taken upon them the profession of Christ; but it is necessary that the ruling powers, the whole power corporate, should have done so, and when they have done so, theirs is a Christian kingdom; for the kingdom standeth not in the subjects, but in the king and the subordinate powers of government. Power is an essentially distinct thing from subjection, given by God in sacred trust for sacred ends. These ends, no doubt, include the good government and well-being of the people; but the subject people are not looked upon by God as having the power,

but as being under the power; and therefore, I have said, that a Christian kingdom consisteth in this, that the king, if he be absolute, and if not, the king and those with whom he divides the power, should have professed allegiance unto the Lord Jesus Christ, by coming under the sacrament of baptism; and this done, that kingdom is regarded as a Christian kingdom. Moreover, it is not necessary to constitute a Christian kingdom, that all the powers taking on Christ's profession should be Christians at heart. However desirable this were, both in Church and State, it is not to be expected in either; for in every field of wheat the enemy will sow tares. Pure communion in the Church, and pure administration in the State, are continually to be sought after, and much, much to be desired: but that they are never found is no reason to conclude that there is no Christian Church, nor yet Christian State. Be it so, then, that the end of the Church, in respect to the world, is to bring the kingdoms thereof under Christ's authority, and that a kingdom cometh under His authority when the powers that be have taken upon them the profession of Jesus Christ; when such a state of things hath come about in any kingdom, a new form of responsibility ariseth, and a new order of things beginneth. Christ straightway taketh such kingdoms under His guardianship, and entreateth them with His special favour, and setteth them upon the work of destroying His enemies; which are idolatry, superstition, will-worship and wickedness of every kind. I say not that He useth the sword of the Christian king first, but rather the preaching of the word. His angels He sendeth forth unto the nations, to make known unto them and their kings the good and gracious purposes of God, which messengers, rejecting, stoning and slaying, then it is, that He sendeth fire and sword to devour these wicked people; warning first and execution last. And when the execution cometh sure, though late, He useth to honour therein those who know His name: as, for example, He hath done Great Britain against Mohammedans, Brahmins, and Buddhists, in the east; and against infidel France in the west; and as He did heretofore use Constantine and Theodosius against Paganism. But when a Christian kingdom itself becomes apostate, there is raised up against it a scourge of a more terrible kind; as for example, Infidelity against the Papacy, the Saracens and the Turks against the Greek Church of old. But without entering particularly in this place, into the condition and treatment of a Christian State, I am satisfied to have thus brought it forward as a distinct object of God's government of the world; whereby He doth show by great political examples what blessings political He would confer upon nations, if they would but acknowledge His Son; speak-

ing to them, not by words merely, but by examples, and saying, "Now, therefore, be wise, be instructed, O ye judges of the earth; serve God with fear; kiss the Son, (kiss, that is, do homage to the Son,) lest ye perish from the way."

Now this state of things, expressed shortly by the name a Christian kingdom, had not yet arisen in the world when John received this vision. It was not among the things which then were, but among those which were to be. The churches existing apart from the kingdom, were then in being; the seven angels and the seven golden candlesticks; but the Church, including the kingdom, and not subordinating it, was not yet in being. The Church amongst the subjects, showing the grand example of subjection, was in being; but the Church amongst the potentates, showing the grand example of power, was not yet in being. The Church under persecution was nobly showing forth the truth of Christ, patiently suffering for the sin of the world; but as yet the Church had exhibited nothing of Christ's office, as Head of kingdoms. This was a state of things that came not into being until the baptism of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. Then, indeed, Christ began to act as a King within the bounds of the Roman empire, which this prophecy chiefly or almost entirely respecteth; and from that time commenceth, as we shall show at large hereafter, the division of the book, entitled in our text, "the things that are to be;" while the epistles to the seven churches describe the things which are. God's purpose by the world had obtained such actual accomplishment, as is described in the first three chapters. The ministers and the churches had been revealed, but the Christian kings and kingdoms waited to be revealed, until the time of Constantine the Great: therefore is the one called "the things that are," and the other "the things that are to be hereafter." Now, though the things that are to be hereafter begin at the fourth chapter, and therefore the things that are be doubtless contained in the second and third chapters, we are not thence to conclude that the one ceased when the other began. On the other hand, the constitution of the angels and the churches remains unaltered and unalterable, until Christ shall come again. He who would set it aside fighteth against God and His Christ, and shall be treated with the most exemplary judgment. It is not superseded when an additional constitution is introduced, while at the same time the introduction of Christ into the kingdoms marks an era in the history of God's dealings with the world; and it also marks an era in the history of the Church, which from that time forth laboured against the new form of wickedness. The form of wickedness, against which the

Church laboured for the first three centuries, was a kingdom wholly under the profession and power of Satan. Paganism, and idolatry, and every form of diabolical error held the throne. There was no profession of Christ, but the most inveterate disavowal of Him. There was no delusion of the saints, nor attempts to delude them. It was absolute violence, raging power, unmitigated persecution of the name of Christ. Far otherwise when the kingdoms became Christian; for then Satan, having changed his method of attack, and adopted new weapons of warfare, the Church was constrained to adopt new methods of defending the truth: and martyrdom now, though the same in principle, and the same in glory, was different in all its outward circumstances; for now they made martyrs with the name of Christ in their lips, affecting His authority and the glory of His God. Hence it comes to pass that, in various parts of this book we have the martyrs separated into two divisions, (Rev. vi. 11, xii. 11, compared with xii. 17, and Rev. xx. 4;) the one class being distinguished by the appellation of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God,—and the other, by the denomination of them who had "not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands:" yet have both classes the same honour of the first resurrection, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. This, therefore, is the distinction between the state of things which was in being when the vision was given to John, and the state of things which came into being afterwards; the things that are, and the things that are to be hereafter; and having given the ground of this distinction, I now proceed without further introduction to treat of the things which are, as they are laid out to us in the second and third chapters, understanding thereby a constitution of things not temporary, but enduring until the coming of the Lord.

Each of these epistles, as hath been said, consisteth of three parts. First, the superscription or personal designation which Christ taketh to Himself; secondly, Christ's personal charge unto the angel of the Church; and, thirdly, a word of the Spirit unto the churches, and, indeed, not to the churches only, but to every one who hath an ear to hear. Now, upon this method which the wisdom of God hath adopted for ordering the matter, I wish, first of all, to make some observations. With respect to the personal designation with which each letter is inscribed, I have already observed this general principle, that with the slightest addition, all he seven separate designations are found in the vision itself, united

into one. The vestments, circumstances, and words presented in the vision are subdivided into seven parts, which are severally used to designate the person of the Son of man; showing us again the great principle of diversity in unity. As the Godhead is generally set forth by seven attributes, generally called His essential attributes; which, to name them, are His "being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth," even so, when the completeness of our great Shepherd and Bishop's character is set forth, He is represented as clothed upon with a sevenfold investment of attributes, which, after they have been exhibited in the unity of His person, are separated from each other, and exhibited in various exercise for the profit of His Church; and to the effect that they might in all the churches be well known and understood, and by all the angels of the churches who represent Christ, be well apprehended and borne in mind, seven churches in their circumstances best fitted to exemplify them, are chosen out from the multitude which then were in the world, and in a letter to their angels, He showeth Himself forth in that peculiar attribute, exercising it for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. This I believe to be the reason of these various personal designations with which Christ inscribeth His epistles. As for the epistle itself, it is addressed to the angel, to the minister of the word and ordinances,—the guardian and the watchman, and the representative of Christ in that Church, and not unto the Church itself. This, now, is a great point, establishing beyond a doubt the dignity of Him who ministers the word and the sacraments; that, as a king is looked upon, and spoken to, as the representative and the responsible head of the kingdom, so is the minister looked upon as the representative and responsible head of the Church. It necessarily follows, that He neither can nor may shrink from this responsibility; that he neither can nor may surrender it to any power on earth, without betraying the trust reposed in him by Jesus Christ; and that no power on earth may dare to take it from him, without insurrection against, and invasion of, the dignity of Jesus Christ. As a king, however, hath counsellors to assist him in judgment, and magistrates to assist him in executing judgment, who receive their authority from and execute their commission under him, so hath the minister of the Church a power, yea, and he is provided with an ordinance for the appointment of elders and deacons, who may assist him in the discharge of his onerous office. Yet withal, unto him Christ looketh for the right ordering of the whole Church; or else, if He did not, why in these seven instances address Himself to him only, censure him only, approve him only, threaten him only?

This question cannot be answered otherwise than by saying that he, and he only, is held responsible for all that is said and done. This is a great point, and I touch it often because it is little apprehended. God knows, it is not vanity; for every additional view which I take of my office overwhelms me, and condemns me only the more. If I durst be unfaithful to my office as an interpreter, the thing from which I would shrink would be to tell out to my own conscience and to the Church, which knows my weakness, the requirements which the great Shepherd expecteth at my hand. But I must forget myself, and the Church of which I am a minister, and every inferior interest whatever, when I set my face like a flint to interpret God's word. But in all this, right glad am I that I speak the constitutions of the Church of Scotland, whereof I am a sworn and bounden minister; for while by her constitutions the body of the people are treated as subjects, and not as rulers,—whereby she is distinguished from all dissenting churches, wherein the people rule themselves, their minister, and all,—and yet treated as free men, without whose call no minister ought to be ordained over them, whereby, again, she is distinguished from the practice, at least, if not from the canons, of the orthodox and true Church established in England;—while, I say, the body of the people are represented in the rulers, the minister, elders, and deacons; and these again are represented in the minister, in all the higher acts of the Church, such as prayer, laying on of hands, preaching, and so forth. Now as God hath no artificer in His word, which doth ever represent the course of His Providence, we certainly conclude, that the Church must look up to its minister as the immediate and only channel through which, as a body, they do receive benefits from Christ; and they ought, therefore, to be in continual acts of faith, hope, and charity; of prayer and thanksgiving, on his account. And he likewise, feeling that the prosperity of so excellent a thing as Christ's Church dependeth on him, ought also to feel how needful is every grace to him, how perfect he should be in knowledge, in wisdom, in patience, in suffering, wanting nothing, seeing so much dependeth on him; seeing his sins and shortcomings bring judgment and Divine wrath, not upon himself only, but upon his people. I confess for myself, that the study of this aspect of Christ as the Universal Bishop, while it hath filled me with the most exalted ideas of my calling, and delivered me, upon the one hand, from popular influence, and, on the other, from the slavish bondage of ecclesiastical polity, into the true liberty and largeness of my office; it hath, upon the other hand, impressed me with an inexpressible sense of the importance of personal completeness, blamelessness, faithfulness, watchfulness in doctrine, in discipline, in speech, in

temper, in everything personal as well as official; because I see that, without such diligent perseverance, my flock must suffer loss, the Church of Christ bear scandal, and my Lord himself underlie reproach in the house of His friends.

Now I am willing to confess, that this doctrine concerning the dignity of the angel, minister, pastor, or bishop, were dangerous doctrine, and ready to pass into abuse, just as the doctrine of kings reigning under Christ hath passed into the abuse of brutal power and passive obedience, were it not defended and prevented by the third part of these epistles; which is an address, not from Christ personal, but from the Spirit of Christ, unto the churches. This is the counterbalancing principle in the constitution of a Church; that while Christ's voice is to be expected through the minister, and in him Christ's person is to be honoured, the Spirit of Christ is equally to be honoured as answering in the churches. For with the same constancy with which Christ speaketh to the angels and to them only, with the same constancy doth the Spirit speak unto the churches. These are co-ordinate, co-equal, and co-essential principles in every Church; to wit, a preacher speaking with the authority of Christ, a Church answering with the witness of the Spirit. If the water and the blood, the two sacraments, be two of the witnesses upon earth, then is the Spirit also a third witness, (John v. 6–8;) of which witnesses the first two dignify the ministerial office, and the last doth dignify and consecrate the Church. With what consideration, therefore, the minister asketh and demandeth, yea, and insisteth upon, the privilege of his office,—and he is not worthy of his office who would not die, rather than yield its prerogatives to prince or to people,—even with that same consideration ought he to respect, and reverence, and wait for, and assure himself of receiving the witness of the Spirit from the body of the Church. And when there is harmony between these two co-equal and co-essential testimonies, you have the only guarantee of truth which is to be had in this nether world. Happy, happy is the Church that rightly preserveth the balance of these two mutually dependent and mutually corrective authorities. When either preponderates, evil ensues; when either is suppressed, there is no limit to the extent of the evil that will ensue; but when both are suppressed, the Church is gone utterly apostate. Now I freely admit, that in the first ages of the Church, when the memory of Christ and His apostles, and the apostolical men, and the other first preachers, was fresh and vigorous in the Church, the tendency was, to give too much weight to the ministers of the word, and too little to the witness of the Spirit in the people; and so, by degrees, was matured that form of error in Church government, which ad-

vanceth one man to a monarchical power over several ministers of the word and sacraments; which I can bear with, if it be merely for preservation of the Church's union; but if it be for constituting a distinct order of men, essentially above the ministers of the word, to come between them and Christ, I protest against it as a subversion of the foundations. This invention arose in the allowance, I will say, rather than the establishment of it, in the third and fourth centuries of the Church; anterior to which, no bishop might have within his diocese two communion tables, or altars, as they were called; for it is thus written in the 24th Apostolical Canon, "If any priest, (which word signifies presbyter or elder,) if any elder, despising his bishop, gather a separate congregation and erect another altar, being not able to convict his bishop of anything contrary to godliness and righteousness, let him be deposed, as one that affects dominion; for he is an usurper: as also all the clergymen that are his accessaries, [by clergymen was understood all office-bearers in the Church, of whatever name and degree:] and let the laymen be suspended from communion. Let these censures be passed after a first, second, and third admonition from the bishop." Upon this state of things, which exactly representeth my standing, and the standing of all ministers of the Church of Scotland, there gradually supervened the method of prelates and metropolitans, which, as I said above, I can bear with being constituted, as in the Church of England I believe it is, for maintaining unity in the Church; but if for establishing an order above my own, to control my own, I never will cease to lift up my voice against it. But it cannot be that it is so regarded by the Church of England, seeing the bishop is ordained by the hands of common ministers; and in right of that ordination preaches, baptizes, and ministers the sacrament. Moreover he dares not to go beyond the rubric in exercising jurisdiction; and when a bishop lately would have introduced a set of questions of his own, it was regarded as unconstitutional.—It may be thought that I should not meddle with these things; but it is a great comfort to me to see the constitutions of a sister Church not inconsistent with the canons of the word of God. I desire unity, and I seek it diligently where it may be had in practice, without sacrificing the unity of truth; and therefore I meddle with these matters, not to provoke, but to prevent schism; not to divide, but to restore unity where division hath too much prevailed. This is indeed the truth, as my conscience beareth me witness.—But in process of time, when the bishop of the Roman Church began to assert, first his metropolitan, and then his papal supremacy, the bishops of the Church contended against him, and asserted their co-equal and co-essential dignity; and thus the mat-

ter stood in controversy, until at length Justinian, by his Pandects, put all the bishops of the western Roman empire under the authority of the pope, making his verdict final in all matters ecclesiastical; by which act Justinian consummated the imperial apostasy, in daring to subvert the foundations of the Church, and originated the long career of the pope, which ended in the subjugation of the empire also. But when monk Augustine, the pope's tool, came to claim this supremacy over the bishops of Britain, they rejected with indignation every such interference with the liberties of the Church in Britain; and so also, at a later date, did the Culdees of Scotland: and from this time forth the churches in these lands, with less or greater strenuousness, maintained a protestation against that usurper. At the reformation, the Scriptures being interpreted and preached unto the people, the witness of the Spirit arose in the churches: and in the Church of Scotland, with whose constitutions I am best acquainted, after some years of a transition state, all the great principles presented to us in these epistles were reconstituted. The ministers of the word and sacraments were put upon a level with each other, in equal dignity under Christ; and the unity of the churches and of the doctrine was preserved,—in the first instance by means of superintendents, and afterwards by means of Presbyteries. At the same time, while the supereminent dignity of the minister of the word and sacraments was thus maintained, the answer of the Spirit in the churches was most diligently preserved; for, although the ministers of the word might have found the gift of preaching in some one, he was not permitted to be set over a Church, until the Spirit had witnessed in that Church to his doctrine. The people must first hear him, and, having heard him, must call him to be their minister, and promise him all duty, obedience, and provision in the Lord, before the Presbytery would take it upon them to set him apart by the laying on of hands. If I understand anything, this is as essential to the health and prosperity of the Church as is the dignity and prerogative of the ministers. And I do honour much that race of Scottish churchmen, who through the long cold and bleak winter of the last century, more disastrous to the Church of Christ, perhaps, than any century before it, did fight the battles of the Church, contending against those false churchmen and shallow politicians who would impose ministers upon a people without a call, resisting not the rights of the people only, but resisting the right of the Holy Ghost to answer in the churches unto the truth of the doctrine preached by the minister.

In the method, therefore, of these seven epistles, I do discover these great principles:—First, a Universal Bishop, Jesus Christ the

Great Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, who is head of every Church, who alone hath the spiritual supremacy, and in whom the scattered churches reunite and are one; the Representative of God —God's Shepherd, Pastor of His elect people: secondly, I discern, as necessary to every Church, an angel, messenger, or ambassador of Christ, who, without interference of a third party, shall come and go, with all messages, between the Head over all and all the congregation: and, thirdly, I do discern the people to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, in whom, as one, the one Spirit speaketh, whose voice, as it cannot be contrarious to itself, so ought the people to eschew schism, and strive after unity, which they will best do by consorting much with the word of God, which containeth the unity of the Spirit, in the diversity of all times, places, and persons. Thus by using the word of God as the test,—not a part of it, but the whole of it; for to prefer a part of it, is to sanctify schism,—the many members of a Church should strive to come into oneness of mind and spirit, and to be delivered from all partiality and hypocrisy, which God surely willeth, and which, therefore, they may surely hope for; and being thus attuned, they shall become like the many-piped organ into which the minister of the word breathes the inspiration of truth, proved to be the inspiration of truth by the melody, the unbroken melody, which ascendeth from the whole Church, like the incense of the morning and the evening sacrifice. But, alas! seldom is it the delectable experience of a minister to find such social harmony in the Church over which he is appointed. Nevertheless, though they were as divided as the Corinthian Church, ought he to believe, and hope, and pray, that the Spirit will speak from the midst of them. He ought to reverence the Church as the conscience where the Spirit dwelleth; and the churches ought to reverence him, as the tongue with which the Lord of the Spirit speaketh,—and this notwithstanding the incongruities, imperfections, and inconsistencies which they observe in one another. It is, I say it again, in this mutual reverence, faith, and hope, that the ordinance of a pastor and a people groweth into substantial life. Through conscience of the ordinance, as an ordinance of God; and through obedience of it, as a commandment of God, with all reverence, faith, and hope, it cometh to pass at length, that the ordinance groweth into the fruitfulness, and blessedness, for which it was ordained. Otherwise than as I have described above, I believe that the relation of pastor and people will never prosper. If the people will presume to stand between the pastor and Christ, and reprove him or dictate to him, then they trample him under foot, and step into the throne of Christ. If the pastor will not give good

heed to the satisfaction of the people, and be desirous to hear their voice, and to reverence their voice, he despiseth not them, but the Spirit who speaketh to them, and in them; and he will chance, nay, he will be sure, to suffer loss at the hand of that Spirit whom he hath offended. Let these principles sink into the hearts of both ministers and people;—let them be the grounds of faith, and prayer, and diligent observance;—and we may never fear that the fruit will be peace and prosperity, so far as may serve God's glory and our own good.

EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS.

"*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*"—REV. ii. 1–7.

According to the method which we have laid down above, we propose to treat these epistles under three heads. First, The superscription or designation which the writer taketh to himself; secondly, The charge to the angel or minister of the Church; thirdly, The exhortation of the Spirit to the Church itself. But before entering on each, it will be convenient and satisfactory in a few words to set forth something concerning the condition of the city in which the Church was planted. Ephesus was a famous city, according to Strabo, one of the best and most glorious of cities, the metropolis of proconsular Asia, situated upon the river Cayster, near the shore of the Egean sea. Its origin is lost in the fables of antiquity. Its inhabitants were greatly addicted to the study of curious arts; to magic, sorcery, and judicial astrology; to such an excess indeed that it became proverbial in antiquity to denominate charms or words used in incantation *Ephesian Letters*. Of this disposition of the place, some striking illustrations are contained in the 19th chapter of the Acts, vers. 13–21; where also we see the triumph of the name

of Jesus, and of His gospel, over the exorcists and magicians, who burned their books to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver. It was a place also of great superstitions and devotion to the goddess Diana, whose temple there was justly reckoned one of the wonders of the world; as is graphically delineated in the words of the same chapter of the Acts. This city was first visited by St Paul, about the year of our Lord 54. He was well received of them, and entreated to remain; but he could not at that time, being bound for Jerusalem. He left behind him Aquila and Priscilla, who received Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, and instructed him more perfectly. He laboured much in convincing the Jews; so that when Paul returned he found disciples, yet only initiated into the doctrine of John's baptism. Upon these Paul laid his hands, and the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied, and all the men were about twelve, (Acts xviii. 19, to xix. 8.) These twelve men were the foundation of the Church in Ephesus. On this second visit, Paul continued with them by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. A third time he visited Ephesus, on his way to Jerusalem; or rather I should say, he sent for the elders of the Church to Miletus, and there delivered to them that noble charge which is recorded in the 20th chapter of the Acts. Some say, though upon what authority I cannot find, and I rather believe upon no good authority, that he visited their city itself a third time; certain it is, that Timothy succeeded to him in the ministry of that Church, (1 Tim. i. 3;) "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia;" and the consent of antiquity is, that Timothy continued there until the time of his death, which, they say, he met with in opposing in the streets the profane and obscene festivals of the Ephesians. This event took place, according to some, in the time of Nerva, who succeeded Domitian the last of the twelve Cæsars; in whose days John was exiled to Patmos, and received these visions. But others prefer the very time when John was in Patmos. If either of these traditions be correct, and all antiquity is agreed as to the one or other of them, Timothy must have been the very person addressed as the angel of the Church of Ephesus. It is also currently reported amongst the ancients, that John made his residence at Ephesus, and laboured much amongst the churches of Asia, before his banishment to Patmos. Still more certain is it, that upon the death of Domitian, he returned to Ephesus, in the year of our Lord 97, and died three years afterwards.—Such are the short notices of Ephesus and the foundation of the Church there, up to the time of the uttering of this epistolary charge. With

respect to its after history and present state, they will be more appropriately spoken of at the conclusion of our remarks upon this epistle, which we now take up in order.

And first, we are to treat of the name or designation which Christ specially appropriates to Himself in addressing the Ephesian Church: "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." This designation may be considered amongst the rest as generic; that is, expressive of the general character of Universal Bishop, which He bears to all the churches. I find something of the like kind in the first of the seals, which presents us with a triumphant emperor;—triumph over His enemies being the generic character of all the seals which conclude with the triumphant advent of Christ, given in the 20th chapter by similar symbols of a rider upon a white horse. So, in writing epistles to the churches, He presents Himself to the first, with those symbols of the Universal Bishop, in which He shall be known when the number of His saints shall be accomplished; as it is written, (Rev. vii. 17,) "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." If again, we look upon Him as the High Priest trimming the light of the churches, and holding up the stars to the view of the world during the night, the long night of His absence, until the Sun of Righteousness shine forth in His strength, then doth it convey the beginning and continuance of that aspect in which He shall be exhibited in the New Jerusalem as the light of it, (Rev. xxi. 23,) "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This, then, I consider to be the propriety of this first appellation, that being the first, it is the common or generic representation of His office as the Universal Bishop. And what are the particulars of this His episcopal office? These two: first, He holdeth seven stars in His right hand; and, secondly, He walketh about in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The interpretation of the seven stars we have already enlarged upon both in this and the former lecture, showing that by this symbol is signified the ministers of all the churches: but two points we have not considered; the first, wherefore they should be likened to stars; the second, what is signified by their being holden in Christ's right hand.

The reason why the angels of the churches should be likened to stars is, because they give light during the night. The Apostle Peter saith, in his Second Epistle, that we should "look unto the more sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark

place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise on our hearts." This dawning of the day, and rising of the day star, is again referred to by our Lord, (Rev. ii. 28,) "And I will give Him the morning star," in a connexion, which, as we shall show at large, fixes it down to the time of the first resurrection, when He cometh with all His saints, in the glory of the new Jerusalem,—a time spoken of in all the old prophets, and especially in the Psalms, under the same figure of the morning. For example, (Ps. xlix. 14,) "Like sheep they are laid in the grave. Death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling; but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me." So also in the 110th Psalm, verse 3: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning. Thou hast the dew of thy youth." Of the glorious brightness of this morning the 60th chapter of Isaiah, at the beginning and ending of it, doth testify; and until that glorious exaltation of Jerusalem, there shall be no light, save the light of the stars or angels of the churches, until the closing in of eventide, as it is written in the Prophet Zechariah, (xiv. 6,) "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark, but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord: not day nor night, but it shall come to pass, that at evening tide it shall be light." In the firmament of darkness, which now overspreadeth the earth, there are stars, and there is a moon to rule the darkness. The moon is the symbol of the Church, considered as one, the ruler of the night; the stars are the angels or ministers of the churches. This symbol doth therefore signify that all true light is dispensed to the world by Christ's ministers, until the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and eclipse them all with the glory of His light. It is indeed a high dignity for any order of men to claim unto themselves. But not the less firmly do I believe that it is the view which we ministers should take of our office, and in which the Church should reverently contemplate us; for Christ himself said to His disciples, "Ye are the lights of the world;" and Paul saith in one of his epistles, "In which ye shine as lights in the world." What the apostle here assigns to all believers, whom in another place he calls children of the light, I may assuredly claim for those whom Christ calleth stars, in contradistinction to the churches, which He calleth candlesticks. The candlestick is that which holdeth up the light; but the star is the light itself. It must therefore be proper to the ministers of the churches to have light in them, and to the churches to hold up that light on high; the two together being necessary to

the enlightening of the house. In that same passage to which I have referred above, where Christ saith to His apostles, and first disciples, Ye are the light of the world, He addeth, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house." When He had enlightened certain ones with the word of His truth, He found for them a candlestick or Church, upon whom upborne the light might shine around, and be like the light of a human habitation to a man weary, wayworn, and astray; or like the light of a watch-tower to the mariner upon the dark tempestuous ocean. Let the taper which shines from the lattice of the distant cottage lightening the bewildered traveller, fall from the candlestick which holds it, and it is extinguished, and he is left dark and forlorn. Let the blazing light of the watch-tower fall from that which holdeth it up, and it is quenched among the waves, and serveth no more for a beacon to the weather-beaten ship. Even so, let the light of the minister be separated from the Church, and his glory departeth away. Accordingly, it is so threatened to this very angel, that if he repented not, Christ would come unto him quickly, and remove his candlestick out of his place. This shows us where the place of an ordained minister is,—at the head of his Church. It shows us wherefore his light is fed, for the enlightening of his Church; and being there placed, he is like a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. Would that these things were more frequently in my mind. Would that I could thus always deem concerning myself and concerning my Church; that we should ever feel formed and fitted for one another, whose common well-being and benefit unto the world stand in the mutual esteem of one another, according to this apt similitude. A candlestick is for holding a light, and a light is to be upheld by a candlestick, so an enlightened minister is for being upheld by a Church, and a Church is for upholding the light of an enlightened minister. I say again, I earnestly wish to be ever possessed with these divine ideas; and what I wish for myself I surely can never do better than wish for others.

The second inquiry is, And wherefore are these lights of the churches held in the right hand of the Son of man? For several reasons: First, to show that they are His and not their own; that they are borrowed lights deriving all their power of illumination from Him, according to that word, "This is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and according to that other word, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." This is the truth, specially expressed to the Church of Sardis, by these words: "These things saith He

that hath the seven stars," hath them in possession; answering to that declaration in the Epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 11,—"And He gave (*he* gave, that is, Christ, upon His ascension into glory, when He received gifts of the Holy Ghost for men, these gifts which He had received when He ascended up on high, He gave) to some, apostles; and to some, prophets; and to some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." This great truth, that faithful ministers are Christ's gift unto the Church, and as such to be regarded, is, I think, taught by the place which is given to the stars in His right hand. But this is not all which is contained in the expression *holding* the stars in His right hand. The word translated holding is a different word from that which is used in the 1st and 3d chapters, and denoteth grasp, as a man useth his sword, or any other instrument for effecting his purpose; and therefore I consider that this expression doth, in the second place, convey the idea that the stars are His instrument, which He useth, as Head of the Church, to bring His ends to pass. These stars being the lights of the candlesticks He carrieth about and about, as He walketh in the midst of them; setting one here, and one there, according to His pleasure, and according to the purpose, the special purpose, which He hath by every Church. If I err not, it is the same truth which is taught in Habakkuk's vision of His glory by these words: "He had horns coming out of His hand, and there was the hiding of His power." The horn is the symbol of power, and horns proceeding out of His right hand signifieth powers proceeding out of His right hand. Now, as we shall see in the details, the office of an angel is as much one of power as it is of illumination; as much for government, as for teaching of the Church. And this great truth of our power and authority is conveyed by our reposing in Christ's right hand; while at the same time it is declared to be power instrumental and not power inherent,—power derived from Christ, and not power self-originated. For the instrument in another's right hand is but a tool, an inactive impotent tool, either for good or evil, until aim and force be given to it by an intelligent active being. Such are the ministers of the churches, powerful through Christ to the pulling down of strongholds, and without Him, helpless as a broken reed. And the churches ought to look upon their ministers, as representing not only the wisdom, but likewise the power of Christ, according to that promise of the Lord, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;" and that other word, (Luke x. 27,) "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that

sent me." Oh, how little are these things remembered or thought of! I could stay my thoughts, and weep when I reflect upon the dishonoured institutions of the Church of Christ, her dishonoured persons, her dishonoured ordinances. Some will honour our natural talents, others our natural affections, others our conduct; but, ah me! who honours our office as the right-hand men of Christ? who sees in us our Lord? who recalls to our recollections our high vocation of Christ's ambassadors and legates on the earth. Alas! alas! we forget our own dignity, we cannot carry it through; we seize it sometimes, as it were, by fits and starts, but we wear it not always. God give us grace, Christ give us unction, that we may rightly fulfil this high vocation.

I cannot omit observing in this place, how, in the constitution of our Church, this prerogative of power invested in a minister is exhibited to view, as a distinct and additional thing to the prerogative of light, or knowledge, or truth, according to our constitutions and practice. Such persons as think themselves to be possessed of the gift for teaching and edifying the body of Christ, and have completed their studies in the schools of the Church, present themselves unto the ministers of a presbytery to take proof of the same, which they do by examinations and various pieces of trial proper to the function of a preacher; and being satisfied of his fitness, they give him permission to preach among the churches. This is to recognise him as a star; but he is not put into the possession of power until, as hath been said above, some Church destitute of a minister have witnessed their satisfaction with his doctrine, and their desire to have him set over them. Then is he, not without renewed trial, set over them, to hold the reins of ecclesiastical government, in concert with those who are the elders and deacons of the flock. Now he is invested with power; and the act, the symbolical act, by which this is done, is the laying on of the right hand, which being derived from Christ and the Apostles, doth continually bespeak the stars to derive their power from his right hand, the horns to grow out of the right hand, and thus he who already had been recognised as a star of Christ's, is brought as it were under his right hand by the regular succession of ministers, and under his right hand we are expected always to feel ourselves to be. I cannot tell what sense of awe cometh over my mind, as I write these things. They bring before me such a body and presence of truth as I cannot express. I seem to feel and see my Lord continually beside me. These symbols have such a force above words, as I cannot by words express; but yet I ever feel that what I do express, though but an approximation to the

truth impressed upon my heart, is true so far as I can give utterance to it in words.

We come now to explain the second attribute of our great High Priest, which He assumeth before the Church in Ephesus, expressed in these words: "Who walketh about in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." Now, as the preceding attribute of our Shepherd referreth to the ministers of the Churches specially, so this referreth to the Churches specially; each minister of the word hath a candlestick which is properly called his own, as is evident from the threatening in the 5th verse: "I will come quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, unless thou repent." Let us consider what is contained in this threat, that we may have a proper idea, and use proper language in speaking of the relation between a minister and his church. It is called, "thy candlestick;" because he is responsible for its condition; not that it ceases to be Christ's, or is less His, but rather more, because He hath entrusted it to a responsible keeper. Yet that Christ may teach the Church to reverence His appointed one, He calls the Church his, "*thy*" candlestick, and threatens the whole Church in Ephesus with an entire removal or moving away, if its angel repented not; which is exactly the language used of a kingdom in the Old Testament, and exemplified in the history of Judah and Israel, who were ever visited for the errors of their kings. This doth teach us, that Christ deputeth His power ecclesiastical unto ministers or angels of the [c]hurches; not for the dignifying or beautifying or accomplishing of [th]emselves, but for the instruction, correction, and edification of the [c]hurches under their care: as it is written, "for the perfecting of [the] saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the [bo]dy of Christ." This is the end of all power, civil or ecclesiastical; [the] good of all those over whom it is appointed, not the aggrandise[me]nt of those who are appointed to it: for God, being Himself all [ho]liness, and exercising Himself only unto the good of His [cr]eatures, cannot for any less worthy end depute that power unto [an]other: therefore Christ doth well represent Himself as ever walk[in]g up and down in the midst of the churches. This He doth, to observe their comely order. As heretofore Jehovah was in the midst of the camp of Israel, so is Christ now in the midst of the churches; and for the same purpose, of observing that all things be done according to His mind, and that there be no uncleanness in the midst of us; as it is written, (Deut. xxxiv. 13,) "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." So

also the apostle, speaking of the saints, doth say (2 Cor. vi. 16,) "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This promise made unto the children of Israel from the time they entered into covenant with God, God hath fulfilled to His Church unto this day. To Him to whom He hath given the congregation, to Immanuel, God with us; to Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, hath it appertained to represent God unto the Church,—formerly as Jehovah, and latterly as Jesus. Now let it be understood by every Christian Church, that the Lord Jesus Christ is walking in the midst of us; in our assemblies is present, and from the meetings of the elders is not absent;—whatever is said, heareth; whatever is done, marketh; yea, and whatever is thought, discerneth full well: for "He knoweth what is in man, and He needeth not that any should testify of man." And this His unwearied travel in the midst of His churches, is well designated by His feet of brass; of fine brass, which never tarnisheth, but ever shineth; like the pure metal which floweth from the furnace. Oh, but He walketh amongst us, not as the inquisitor-general of God, but as the comforter and upholder of His saints; that they may feel ever encouraged and strengthened in every good word and work. God walked in the camp of Israel "to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee;" so Christ walketh in the midst of the churches. God besought them not to offend Him, and drive Him away from the midst of them; so Christ beseecheth us. We shall see in the epistles how loth He is to depart; therefore let the churches not be disturbed by His presence, but comforted and confirmed. Yet in such a presence of Him whom her soul loveth; of Him to whom she is betrothed; of Him who hath loved her unto the death, in the lowest pit, and from the highest heavens; in His presence, let her be attired with her beautiful garments; let her be clothed with light as with a garment, and be girded with truth as with a girdle. This is the substance of the thing conveyed, by His walking in the midst of the churches. He would be known as our "refuge and our strength, and a very present help in the time of need;" that we may never be greatly moved; that we may rejoice in the Rock of our salvation; that we may never be afraid of our enemies; and that the shout of a King may be heard among us. Not for fear, I say, but for the banishment of fear; not for overwhelming dread, but for soul-assuring confidence; not for apprehensive alarms, but for strong and holy affections; in one word, for all those ends of grace, mercy, and goodness, which in His incarnation Christ manifested,—and for those higher ends of power and glory

which, since His ascension, the Father hath appointed Him to bring about,—doth Christ make Himself known as He that walketh in the midst of the churches.

While thus every saint, while thus every member of the Church, should feel Christ in these attributes of love and holiness, of comfort and sustentation, present with him, inasmuch as he is a member of the Church, and so feels assured of prospering in every righteous way, this knowledge of an ever-present, ever-observant Head, should especially work all carefulness and constancy in the hearts of those in whose hands the ordering of the churches is vested. For while Christ would comfort His sheep with the assurance that though all should forsake them, He will not: though minister, and elders, and deacons should be found cold or lukewarm and indifferent, heedless of their trusts, and unholy in their lives, still He, the great Shepherd, is with them, is with every solitary believer, is with every handful of sorrowful believers, to do for them all offices whatever which their office-bearers neglect. Though this lesson, I say, of one above all ordinances He taught, yet it is not the object of the ordinance-head to set His ordinance of government aside, but contrariwise to bring it forward as the great means of well-being to the flock; and therefore, He desireth the flock to look at it, and reverence it, and weigh well whether it be accomplishing its end or not. If it be, to bless God for the light of His countenance lifted upon them, in His goodly and sufficient ordinance; if not, to mourn God's judgment resting upon them, His hand stretched out for evil and not for good, and under the deep sense of a famine of the word, or of wrath or displeasure of some kind, to be bowed down before the Lord, and to be exercised with prayer and fasting. But ah me! that I should have to find so much fault. How soon do the rebellious and recreant humours of the flock arise against their rulers if in anything they fail or offend in their duties! Will ye not believe, O ye members of Christ, that let patrons be what they may, and Presbyteries be what they may, Christ sendeth you the minister who is sent to you? A minister cometh not by chance. Is he a dumb dog? then Christ wisheth that a dumb dog should watch over you. Is he a greedy dog which can never have enough? then such is the pleasure of the Head of the Church, for your chastisement;—but ye are not chastened if ye murmur and rebel; for your purification in the furnace of trial;—but ye are not purified unless ye be patient. But no, saith the rebel insubordinate spirit of these days, we will have a minister to our mind; our itching ears shall be tickled; we will dissent from the Church, we will secede and separate ourselves. Will ye? Then do

it at your peril, ye impatient of correction; ye rebels under the rod, do it, and offend the Head of the Church, and set up a standard for yourselves; evil, sore evil, betideth such a spirit in the Church. Oh, that I might be enabled to set forth worthy discourse on these seven epistles, then shall I have done my poor mother Church, as well as every other Church, good service, in finding and bringing back her people to her in the day of her calamity; and I will teach the many parishes of poor Scotland, which are grieved with a profitless ministry, how to be exercised under such a dispensation, with prayer, and mourning, and fasting, instead of flying away to an opposite standard, when the battle sets hard against us. I love the Church of my fathers, her breach is great, but it may be made up again; her wound is grievous, but I trust not incurable.

While thus I have beat about, as it were, to touch at many ports, some will be accusing me of forgetting the proper object of my voyage. Let me therefore recollect myself, and set forth again. It may be asked, But how doth Christ, who is at the right hand of God, or how can He who, as the God-man, is limited to space, be everywhere present, carrying on this work of present superintendency? The answer often rendered to this question, that He is so present in His Godhead, is in truth no answer at all; for if it mean anything, it is that His Godhead can be active when and where His manhood cannot be active, which is to make His Godhead a separate person, and likewise His manhood. If they mean to say that Godhead is everywhere, they speak a great truth; but not in the person of the Son, but in the person of the Father, is Godhead's absolute incomprehensible properties now inherent. The Son, being of the same Godhead, hath, for His part, emptied himself, and come into the limited region of the Christ; He as the Christ is ever spoken of, as the Christ He ever acteth. It is a common error, and therefore the more to be denounced, to speak of Him as now acting in His Godhead, and anon acting in His manhood. I indict it, in any theological court, of flat Nestorianism. Besides, to tell me, that Godhead is everywhere present in the churches, is to give me no information whatever, until I shall first know what Godhead is. Now, it is of the essence, and it is the very essence, of Godhead to be incomprehensible; and therefore, in order to my knowing it, and being comforted by that knowledge, Godhead must come into the comprehensible and intelligible region, which having done in the person of the Son, as Christ, whom I can understand, it becometh necessary to teach me how this person, now limited to the conditions of manhood, can be present in efficient activity, in many places, yea, in all places, at one and the same time. This

question to answer, requires the knowledge of the person and office of the Holy Ghost, who being of the Godhead, doth for the purpose of carrying out that very manifestation of Godhead, which Christ is, condescend out of the absolute and incomprehensible to become the agent for carrying the mind and very life of Christ into every region of creation where God pleaseth to be known, as He is capable of being known by a creature. Christ is God comprehensible, God in outward creature life. The Holy Ghost doth give Himself to be used by Christ, for the purpose of communicating that life of God to the creatures. By means of the Holy Ghost, therefore, acting for the end of revealing and communicating the living embodied Godhead, Christ is present in the churches, in all the churches, how many soever they be. He is present as the word of the faithful minister. He is present as the life of that word in every faithful hearer; He is present with His authority in every faithful ruler; and He is present with obedience in the faithful members of the Church. He is present, even Christ is present, as a regenerator in baptism to every believer; and He is present as a nurse or feeder in the Lord's Supper, to every believer; and He is present in every sentence of the Church, to execute the judgment threatened upon the impenitent, and to restore such as are penitent. He, even Christ, I said, is present, the life and the substance of every ordinance of the Church, and He is all present and not partially in all places. Such is the office of the Holy Ghost: and where Christ is present God is present: present in an intelligible, comfortable form; apprehensive to all our faculties, and sustentative of all our infirmities; and so, having Godhead with us, and in us, in a comprehensive and comprehensible form, we, possessed, delighted, and ravished therewith, do offer worship, yield homage, and submit ourselves in all things to Godhead, incomprehensible, impassible, standing in the person of the Father, being yet the one Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so that the end of the whole purpose is to make Godhead to be known, to be possessed by, yet not be mixed with, but ever worshipped out of, the creature. This is the answer to the question, "How is Christ the God-man, now in heaven, the embodied Godhead, limited to place,—how is He present everywhere in all the churches?" It is answered, like every other question, by the exposition of the Trinity; by which, and by which alone, questions in theology, questions in practical, vital godliness, can be answered.

We now come to the second part of the epistle, which is the charge to the angel, in whom the whole state and condition of the Church is seen as represented, and who is taken as the responsible

person by the great Head of the Church. The notion which I have expressed concerning these churches, that they present seven varieties of temptation and condition, with seven varieties of instruction, to the end of greater completeness in the code of laws and precepts, to be communicated through them to all the churches; this notion will now come to be tried. The specific peculiarity of the Church of Ephesus consisteth, as it seems to me, in a declension of their first love, which ought to grow stronger and stronger according to our longer acquaintance with the unchangeable grace and goodness of our Lord and Master. To this temptation, man's changeableness and love of novelty make him liable. The zeal of a new convert is a proverbial expression, rebuking I know not, whether more our love of novelty, or the diminished zeal of the more experienced. This falling away from primitive zeal is the temptation before which the angel of the Church in Ephesus had not been able to stand, and against which he is warned and threatened, if he repented not. And the proper retort in the government of Christ for this form of backsliding is, "the removal of the candlestick out of its place;" that is, the total falling away of the Church out of the number of Christian churches, through a gradual decay and consumption of its strength. While this I regard as the specific peculiarity of the Ephesian Church amongst the rest, I do not mean to say that this is the only or principal thing to be attended to; for every word of these epistles is full of instruction as to the character of the Universal Bishop, and the duty of His angels, and therefore word by word we shall examine them.

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience." All the charges, without one exception, begin with these words, "I know thy works;" which must, therefore, be regarded as a common condition of all the churches to be known of Jesus, our great Bishop. This is the fruit of His walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, that He is thoroughly acquainted with the condition of each; this is the property of those eyes like a flame of fire, that they penetrate to the hearts and reins of the children of men; those seven eyes in the head of the Lamb which are the seven Spirits of God, that they embrace sevenfold or all-inclusive knowledge. As the Head of the Church, therefore, Christ is omniscient; not merely in the Godhead, but in his Christhead: as God-man, He is through the communicating Spirit conscious of all things which pass over the wide bounds of creation. It is vain for any angel of the churches to think of concealment; whatever we do of iniquity, we do daringly under the eye of Him to whom we are responsible; whatever we suffer through negligence, we suffer in the presence of Him who is

our Lord, and to whom we shall have to give an account of our stewardship. Oh that we could bear in mind that He is in the midst of us, continually surveying our churches, knowing all their discipline, and observing all their order; that we are in His right hand, continually known of Him more thoroughly than we are known of ourselves! What jealousy over our thoughts, what heed unto our words, what care of our flocks, what constancy in the truth, what fear of wickedness would not this work within us! What consolation also in our adversity, what upholding in our sore oppressions, what confidence in the midst of trials, what reward in the midst of persecutions, that He knoweth all our works, of what kind they are!

Having declared His perfect and complete knowledge of all the works of the angel of the Ephesian Church, our Great Bishop proceeds to commend whatever He could in His conduct, which I likewise observe to be a constant rule in these epistles, bringing to view the tenderness, and charity, and kindness of Him we serve; and proving that He delighteth not to make mention of the evil, but of the good, grieveth to rebuke, and loveth to commend; teaching to all masters under Him, to all ministers of the word, to all princes of the people and magistrates of the earth, how they should carry themselves at all times with loving-kindness, with countenance and patronage of what is good,—with severity, and censure, and chastisement, only when it is called for; with the one cheerfully, with the other reluctantly; with the one joyfully, with the other painfully. While this kindly and gracious character of our Great Bishop and Lord is taught us by His general rule of commencing His charges, however severe, with commendations of what would bear commendation, the particular good qualities which He commendeth, of labour and patience in the angel of the Ephesian Church, do confirm the idea, given above, of the specific difference which characteriseth this epistle: for labour and patience are the proof of zeal and love in the service of any master. In these He had once abounded, preaching the gospel, and proving the weapons of His warfare, against that stronghold of Satan where He dwelt. And whosoever would plant or edify the Church of Christ must do it with much labour and patience. It is not a work which will bear to be slightly done, nor to be daubed with untempered mortar. It is not the work of the Lord's day merely, although that is the harvest day of the faithful minister; but it is the work of the whole week ever recurring, and ever prosecuted with unceasing diligence. To relax, is to fall away from our first love, and to stand in peril of seeing our Church decline through our slothfulness. Then, when such seasons of fleshly oppression or worldly temptation arrive, we do well to

attend to this charge, given to the angel of the Ephesian Church, and to meditate the aspect of our Lord, with which it is introduced; as holding the stars in His right hand and walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. And if anything will awaken us from our temporary stupor, the belief and the constant remembrance of this truth will do it. From this general recognition and acknowledgment of His servant's diligence and patience, His gracious and loving Master passeth on to distinguish those things which He particularly approved.

"And how thou canst not bear with them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and hast found them liars." This opens to us some insight into the condition of those primitive churches, and the trials of those primitive pastors. It is a common error to think and to speak of the Church as then enjoying great peace and purity of communion, great soundness of doctrine, and undisturbed exercise of wholesome discipline. How this error could arise in the face of the Apostolic Epistles, which open such fearful declensions and apostasies, envies, divisions, and oppositions; how it should have arisen in the face of all ecclesiastical history, which records the most unheard-of heresies and the most abominable practices which disgraced the Christian name, and brought it into dishonour in those early times, I cannot well account for, otherwise than from the idolatrous desire of finding some outward object of infallibility to worship, and from the controversial questions with the Papacy concerning the authority of the Church. But true it is, beyond all doubt, that in comparison with His wild ragings and unbounded licence in the primitive Church, Satan may well be said among us to be bound. And therefore, instead of blindly prostrating ourselves before the authority of the fathers and the customs of the early Church, we do well to observe the canons and commandments of the Lord and His apostles, and bring all things to this the only test of the truth. There is a Church whose mouth is opened by Christ, and filled with the testimony of truth in all ages; but this complete witness of the truth is not, by outward signs and tokens, to be so identified as to give us a visible thing upon which we may fix God's incommunicable attribute of infallibility. This Church was most active in the primitive times to purge off from itself those foul pestilences which Satan bred in its bosom. There was such an exuberant health in its constitution, that it did soon cast off those impure blotches which arose upon its surface. But for the strong and patient testimony and labour of the first faithful pastors, the good and evil would have been so intermingled as to have brought about speedy

death. Then is a body healthy when it casts off the impurities which it breeds within itself, and heals the wound of its own accord. This office of a physician the bishop of the Church in Ephesus had to bear in an especial measure; for, as hath been said, that city was addicted beyond others to superstition, sorcery, and magic, which are the proper soil for bearing false doctrine and delusions of the devil. The first arch-heretic, according to all ecclesiastical history, was Simon Magus, the sorcerer whom Peter had to deal with at Samaria, who brewed in his devil-possessed heart such hideous errors as men in modern times can hardly conceive, but ere long shall see renewed again; and there being many of his diabolical craft at Ephesus, we may well believe how the bishop of the Church would have continual exercise of his gift of trying the spirits whether they be of God. For we do greatly err, indeed, if we suppose that they came with wickedness in their lips, or with plain and open-faced profession of opposition to the way of truth. They said they were apostles; that is, men sent from God in order to teach some further truth. Generally they professed to come from the Holy Spirit, some of them to be the Holy Spirit, all of them to be messengers from the invisible God. With what cunning artifice of the devil, with what delusions of a corrupted heart and erroneous mind, with what wresting of the Scriptures to their own destruction they came, let the Apostle Paul declare, (2 Cor. xi. 13:) "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works." How these false and cunning men, deceivers and being deceived, were to be proved, the Apostle John teacheth us in his First Epistle, especially in chap. iv. 1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." Whether John meant this as a test of all spiritual deceptions, or only of those which existed in his time, I know not; but this I know, that in that word "Jesus is the Christ" is all truth enclosed, and that every heresy doth deny an essential part of it, every schism doth cut off an essential part of it: and being so, such heresies and schisms are mortal sins, and they who hold them are in peril of damnation, if they repent not. This mother truth, the unit of orthodox faith, consisteth of two subjects,—the one *Jesus*, the other *the Christ*. The former of

these is a fleshly man, a man at all points, a man in flesh, such as I am, tried as I am, conditioned as I am, both soul and body; with all my infirmities; Son of Mary, just seed of David, substance of a fallen woman, made of a woman, made under the law. This subject may be denied, was denied then, and is denied now. It is a fatal error, if persisted in.—Now the other subject, *the Christ*, is that Holy One of God, who was before ages in the Father's bosom, containing the elect of the Father, containing every creature, creating, upholding, redeeming, regenerating, and in the end eternally to establish them; without sin, without defect, the fulness of the Godhead, the anointed One of God, God's holy Priest, God's everlasting King, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son, in whom He is ever well pleased. This is the second subject of that great proposition of truth, which all Socinians, Deists, and Idolaters deny, with all who deny His holiness, His entire holiness, at all times, and in all conditions. Either of these subjects may be denied; and, being so, the great foundation of the faith, "Jesus is the Christ," against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, is subverted. No spirit but the Holy Ghost, being put to the question, can confess to this proposition: every other spirit will deny it in some spiritual point or other. And therefore it is the only creed, the only sufficient creed; and all creeds are but outworks constructed around this, which is our sacred keep, where are laid up the regalia of the crown, the muniments of the kingdom, the palladium of the city. How such persons as coming in the name of the Spirit, or of God, pretended to set aside any of His commandments, to discredit any of His apostles, or to set forth some truth or interpretation of truth, as authoritative in the Church beyond what God's finished word containeth: how such are to be treated, be they who they may, in respect of place, authority, wisdom, or weight of character, of odour for sanctity, of celebrity for charity, of learning, of piety, or with whatever grace endowed, St Paul again declares, whose declaration strikes himself down if he should be found guilty of the like apostasy, Gal. i. 8, 9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."—And when they come with no pretences of new doctrines, but with a subtle assumption of greater strictness and purity, and affecting to walk close by the apostolic rule; then to distinguish such from true reformers of abuses, let the Apostle of the Gentiles again direct us. Rom. xvi. 17, 18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have

learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." If they come with the disguises of brotherly kindness, pretending to subvert the honest trades and occupations of life, and to have all things in common, and to go about preaching and teaching from house to house instead of uniting in lovely communion with the churches, and abiding in the callings to which they are called, take these Scriptures as the means of their detection, which, treating all of brotherly kindness, do carefully guard against such an abuse of it: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord," (Rom. xii. 10, 11.) Here brotherly love is guarded from the evil tendency to sloth and dependence upon others, to which it is liable by the admonition "not to be slothful in business." Again still more distinctly (1 Thess. iv. 9–13,) "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." And such passages abound throughout the epistles, whose chief aim in the sacred canon is to furnish the churches with the means of detecting errors in doctrine and malversations in practice. I have been the more particular on this topic, having had an opportunity of observing in this city the arts of the devil, and being convinced that by far the largest proportion of dissenterism springs from the polluted source of daring innovation, and restlessly seeking to bring their views to pass. The licentious spirit of the age, the indifference to the opinions of men, the toleration of all opinions, the credit given to a man for speaking out what his mind is, instead of trying it and proving it first by the orthodox faith of the Church, do cultivate and cherish the spirit of heresy and schism to such a fearful extent, that I am anxious to advertise my brethren, the ministers of the churches, of their duty in this respect, and of the way of discharging it, seeing that such a proper occasion hath presented itself in the commendation of this angel for his faithfulness in this part of his duty, which certainly doth still pertain to us the ministers of the gospel. The Lord, recalling those services which His servant had done against the enemies of the truth, increases in warmth, and commends with a liberal heart, adding these words:

"And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." This is, I take it, not so much a reiteration of what had been commended in general under the head of patience and labour, as an acknowledgment of the laborious and painstaking way in which he had contended against these wicked persons in the Church, and these false apostles who either came from without, or set themselves up from within, to disturb the soundness of its faith and the harmony of its communion. He had borne the toil necessary to repel them and cast them out: their errors he had sifted and searched; their endeavours to pervert the saints he had withstood; their secret undermining arts by creeping into houses he had exposed; and whatever in him lay, had he put forth in the great service of maintaining the integrity of the faith, and the purity of the Church. It had not yielded to his first endeavours: Satan wrought subtilely and strongly to overthrow this Church, which Paul had planted, which John had watered, and which Timothy, Paul's beloved son, did watch over. And God, for the proof of the believers, did permit the heresies to find a root amongst them, and to endure for a while; but the zealous bishop, whoever he was, had stood to his post of conflict, and maintained the cause of Christ without wavering. Such patience is most essential to every watchman upon the walls of Zion, to every standard-bearer in her armies. It is a long and a tough battle which we have to wage: like the heads of the Hydra, errors start up on every side, and evils lurk in every corner ready to burst forth. Ours is a wakeful, laborious post, to set the battle ever in array; as men fall, to set others in their stead, and to give to every man his station in the field. Oh, ye slothful ministers, awake! arise to the help of the Lord against the mighty: awake your strength, and do valiantly. Be not dismayed, O ye faithful ministers, who have girded yourselves, because you prosper not at the first. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be complete in all things, wanting nothing." Did Paul faint at Rome when all they of Asia forsook him? He trusted in the Lord, and the Lord stood by him; and he was delivered out of the lion's mouth. Did Luther faint when he stood alone in the diet of Worms, beaten with scoffs, and shaken by the timidity of his friends? He trusted in God, and said, "I can no more, God be my help;" and God was his help. So say I to every true-hearted minister who discerneth aright the fearful face of battle that is against us, the disheartening divisions that are in the midst of us; be not shaken or dismayed, but stand up and quit you like men, be strong. Only be assured that it is for the name of Jesus Christ, for the truth contained in that great name ye labour; and rest assured of its speedy and

everlasting triumph against the gates of hell. No weapon formed against it shall ever prosper. To that name every knee, of things in heaven and earth and under the earth, shall bow. And to assure yourself that it is for His name, and not for some other unworthy and destructible object, that you are contending, give heed to the Spirit witnessing within you to the truth as it is in Jesus. Hear Christ answering to the truth of the word, in the mouth of His Church, with His witnessing Spirit. For this keep your souls ever calm and placid, peaceful and joyful in the midst of all privations. See God with your pure heart. Dwell with Him ever in the inward part. Be not bustled out of this God-seeing faculty. See God always, otherwise you beat the air. Expect the fulfilment of these two words of the Lord, John xiv. 23: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The Father is in you, and Christ is in you, both inhabiting you in the person of the blessed Spirit, who is of the one substance of the indivisible Godhead; and if He be in you, He will not be silent concerning the Father and the Son, of whom it is His office to testify, whom it is His only office to manifest; as is declared in that other word of the Lord, John xiv. 21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." These are comfortable words to every Christian, but especially to the minister upon whose shoulders lieth the responsibility of a Christian Church. I would fain arise into these unmolested confidences in that arduous conflict with friends as well as foes which I see arising, for the truth as it was once delivered to the saints. These exhortations some may think beside the office of an interpreter; but why should I hide myself from my own flesh? why should I not comfort my own kindred, the children of my mother? why should I not speak to my fellow-servants of the house, and tell them how to make ready their accounts for the great Head of the house, whom I believe to be near at hand? O ye critical men! do ye cease to be men because ye are critical? Let me alone: I want no quarrel with you. Let me alone to open to the ministers and the churches what a summons abides us all, that we may make ourselves ready for that which we believe in. Go your own way, if ye will go to destruction; but hinder us not to exhort one another, and to provoke one another unto love and unto good works. Ye angels of the churches, my brethren, Christ's servants, give good heed to the false apostles and prophets who are even now in the midst of the Church denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing on themselves swift de-

struction; setting at nought the precious doctrine that He came in our fallen condition; and weaving metaphysical tissues concerning some difference between his humanity and ours, and endeavouring to cast reproach upon those who maintain their identity, as if we made the Sacrifice for sin a sinner. Resist those men without fear, without doubt; for they are the enemies of the truth, and they pervert unstable souls. Those men also, who are subverting the foundations of the Church and State by encouraging a national acknowledgment of the mother of harlots, apostles of the light of liberalism, and in so far forth enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ, resist. "By their fruits ye shall know them." What fruit of reproach for Christ's sake do they endure from the Deists, the Socinians, the Atheists, the Schismatics, in one word, the great congregation of the liberals of this day? They are exalted to the heavens; they suffer no reproach for Christ's sake, except such reproaches as I now indite, wrung from the grieved hearts and disappointed minds of their brethren, who love them, but cannot follow them into their wicked league with iniquity.

These commendations of the angel's past services being finished, the Lord proceeds to the more painful duty of rebuking and remonstrating with him for declining from his steadfastness, and cooling in his zeal and love. Truly his zeal had been great and his devotion noble; and the Lord recalls it with grateful words. If a man might repose upon his arms in this warfare, if he might lay down his spiritual sword, and say, "Sword, thou hast devoured enough," it was permitted to this angel so to do: and so he had done, alas! thinking haply that he had gained his object in bravely and successfully withstanding the enemies of the Lord, he thought to enjoy himself with repose; when the Lord gently admonishes him that this love of repose consisteth not with his former love, and that he must not relax, but proceed towards the goal of everlasting rest and glory, which in due time he should attain if he fainted not.

"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works." How delicately, how lovingly, this note of censure is introduced, "I have somewhat against thee!" It remindeth me of our Lord's dealing with Simon the Pharisee, who suspected evil, because he permitted the penitent sinner to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head; instead of retorting His suspicions with rebuke, He began with the meekness of charity and wisdom, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." So here being minded to rebuke the angel of the Church of Ephesus, He begins by recounting his past services, and celebrating

his excellent works; and then gently passeth over to the other strain, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee." Oh! this pleaseth my heart well. What a contrast between God and myself! If I am displeased with a servant, how ready am I to forget all past acts of duty, and at once to strike the jarring note of contention! God forgive me, and enable me to copy from Thine own image! Oh, how different from the pharisaical spirit, which makes a merit of remarking a fault, of honestly, as they say, and at once correcting it; this they call coming directly to the point. And certes honesty is greatly to be prized, but charity far more. It is not the perfection of character thus bluntly to speak: and the proof of it is, that such plain-spoken men are generally proud and vain of their bluntness. Far more akin to the divine method is that of the well-bred and polite gentleman, who, repressing temper, doth with courteous language, and sweet disinclination, approach the painful subject. However much this politeness is abused to hypocritical and evil ends, I say it aimeth at a good thing, which the Spirit of Christ enableth us to realise. And the same observation I may make of all the polite and civil ordinances of life, that they do embody in themselves a shadow and a likeness of that charitable spirit which the gospel teacheth, and the believer practiseth. The world wisely considered, the spirit of society looked at in the light of Christian truth, is, with all its faults, a most venerable ordinance for restraining the boundless selfish dispositions of man. And woe be to him, be he Christian or not, who sets it at naught!

The great Master of the house having demonstrated His tender love and true esteem of His servant, by this gentle way of approaching that which was the chief subject of his epistle, and having as much as possible disarmed His mind of resentment and prejudice, doth bring His charge directly and distinctly, without any windings of speech, in perfect honesty, combined with perfect love: and the charge is, "Thou hast left thy first love." Like a husband who hath reason to complain of his wife's diminished affection, or a wife of a husband's, the Lord of glory complains to one of His ministers: how condescending in Him, how honourable to us! He wants love, and nothing less than love can please Him: He is troubled by the falling away of our love: and He laments over it: man all over, even in His glory, He mourns over a brother's weaned affections; and He condescends to remonstrate with him on the subject. How beautiful, how sublime is such condescension in God's anointed one, who ever hath, and ever holdeth the love of God, and of all elect angels, and of all glorified saints, thus to make His moan over His turtle dove upon the earth! My soul, be lifted up with admira-

tion, and learn thus lowly to entreat the love of the lowliest! Ah! this marriage of the soul to Christ, the faithfulest the best of husbands, should yearly grow more close and delightful; and if it do not, it proveth degeneracy in us; and such degeneracy argueth great ingratitude for the experience of continual mercies; and such ingratitude will bring with it temptations to some other affection, which will insinuate adulterous thoughts, and end in sore chastisements, bereavements of our children, and in the end utter apostasy. To guard the soul which He loved from eternity, and for which He died, against such a fearful catastrophe, the Lord interposeth with His remonstrance, saying, "Thou hast left thy first love." If my idea be true, that there is an allusion in this to the married state, then it favours the idea which prevails among our Scottish peasantry, that the union of a minister to a flock is like wedlock, and ordination is like the joining of the marriage tie. If by the flock be understood the whole congregation of the Church, as the Church of Scotland, or the Church of England, the idea I believe to be a true one, and so true, as conspiring with favourable circumstances, to have given rise in a good degree to the celibacy of the clergy in the Roman apostasy; but being understood of a particular flock, instead of binding us to the whole Church, of which Christ is the husband, and leaving us at His disposal and direction, it would bind us to a small section, and tend in a great degree to break up the unity of the Church. Be this, however, as it may, the truth is the same, that Christ considers the soul both of believer and minister as betrothed to Him, according to Paul's declaration, (Rom. vii. 4,) "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Would that this, the first form of temptation which is specified in our Bishop's sevenfold epistle—the epistle universal to His Church—the temptation of a gradual declension of love had been guarded against, and His admonition attended to, then would the fatal apostasy never have been realised, which grew not out of erroneous doctrine, for what Church so orthodox as the western churches, during the first five, yea, seven centuries; nor grew it from the want of rigid and regular canons of discipline, which were multiplied and strictly enforced, but out of a declension of love to Christ, and to His children; in room of which came love of the princes of the world, whom also she seduced, and tyranny over her children, whom she slew. Love to Christ, manifested in love to His sheep and lambs, is the principle which should ever hold the ascendency in a pastor's bosom. When Peter, thrice entreated of his Lord if he

loved Him, three times protested his love, the Lord as oft replied, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs:" as much as to say, Let thy love find its object there, where mine rested; for me the Father loveth, because I give my life for the sheep, and thee will I love if thou feed my sheep; insomuch that in the day of judgment, the destinies of the nation shall turn upon this very question, How they did entreat the least of these "my little ones." If so be that love to Christ is to reign over all affections in the believer's heart, and that love is to be shown in acts of loving-kindness to His children, we may well say, that all things in the rulers of the Church are of secondary consequence when compared with love. All zeal for the truth, and controversy to maintain it against the error, and wisdom to discriminate between the good and the evil, all learning, which of the ministerial office is an indispensable requisite, ought to have its impulse, and its enjoyment, and its use, in ministering the truth for the love of the brethren, that they may be nourished up in sound doctrine, rooted and grounded in love. Zeal for sound doctrine, flowing from any principle but love, is bigotry, or rivalry, or contention; or at best blind devotedness to good old ways: and all discipline which hath any other spring, is the love of power, and worketh ambition in him that exerciseth it, bondage in him upon whom it is exercised, and is far from being commendable when proceeding in this arrogant and tyrannical mood. Thus wrought the Papal Church, until by its prodigious influence it engendered throughout the world a system of the sorest thraldom, deepest darkness, and most malignant error. We ministers of the word would do well to learn of what spirit we are, and to give great diligence both to cultivate in our own hearts, and to practise in our lives, the love of the flock, as the only sufficient way of testifying our love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Behold what fearful issues wait upon the neglect of it!

"Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." There is forgiveness with Christ that He may be feared, and plenteous redemption that He may be sought after. He who gave it as the great canon of His Church, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him: and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him," (Luke xvii. 3, 4,) is the person to carry the canon into full effect. Else were He not prepared for the office of Intercessor, even to the very best of His saints, who more than seven times a day, yea seventy

times seven, offendeth against Him. In the spirit of mercy and forgiveness He calleth upon His servant to consider his ways, and remember how far he hath declined from the place of his former footsteps, and to repent, and be such a one as He was heretofore, when He fulfilled so laboriously and patiently the part of the good Shepherd, who giveth His life for the sheep. He maketh no question for the sake of orthodoxy concerning his ability to repent, or for the sake of clearness concerning the nature of true repentance; but in round terms and plain language, commands him to change his mind and course of life. And so did the apostles, in preaching to the Gentiles. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth all men to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." And this is the right way of going to work; because every commandment of God implies in it His will that the same should be obeyed, and He wisheth not the suspicion to be raised in men's minds of His willingness to lend the necessary aid. By adopting the contrary method, of taking men aback in the full career of their purpose, with much discovery of the help necessary to success, it hath come to pass at least in our Scotland, that the very will of God to assist all men in a holy life, yea His very will that all should be saved, hath come practically to be doubted, if not publicly to be denied, whereby men are landlocked amongst the imaginary difficulties and impediments to a holy course. Most true it is that the bitter root of Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, which destroys men's souls by ascribing to them that power which they have not, did call for some antidote of true doctrine concerning man's total inability; which the Church assembled in the Synod of Dort did timeously furnish: but methinks the antidote hath turned into poison, and needeth itself an antidote. For men, through erroneous uses of the great doctrine of election have come to misrepresent God in a fearful way, as if He had no affection of love for all men, and no disposition to keep them in every good course. But the Lord and His apostles understood it otherwise when they thus take God's willingness for granted, and say little or nothing about it; but continually apply to men's conscience with discourse of their own guilt, and to men's will with discourse of repentance and regeneration. Whereby they did work in them the sense of sin and the feeling of infirmity; for unless a man be preached to as responsible for a holy, for a completely holy life, how shall he either know the extent or feel the guilt of his sin? unless a man be called upon for exertion in the way of all perfection, how

shall he come to know the infirmity, the helplessness of his own strength? But by being addressed as if he stood in Adam's very place, and had Adam's very power, of which the consciousness still surviveth, though the oppression of a stronger on our breast prevent its use, that consciousness of the Holy One is awakened within us, and the sense of the vile oppressor groweth grievous; and we cry out to Him who alone can help us, and we are holpen; and we learn to trust in Him, and to depend upon Him entirely "for life, and breath, and all things." And thus a religious life proceedeth: for it is in the endeavour after what is right, that power from on high descendeth to our help. This is the reason why our Lord calleth upon His servant to repent, and do his former works, without any word of parley concerning the nature of repentance, or the necessity of Divine aid.

And, as in Scripture, reward is ever connected with obedience, so is punishment ever connected with impenitent disobedience. It is not the being found in evil which the gospel denounceth damnation against; that God winketh at; but it is the continuing therein, after the knowledge of God's forgiveness in Christ, of His gift of eternal life in Christ, and of righteousness and true holiness in Christ, hath been preached to us, and we repent not of our sins, nor turn away from our idols to serve the living God: then it is, and upon such obstinacy, that the gospel fulminates the threatenings not only of hell after judgment, but likewise of the wrath and revenge of God in this life, who is risen out of His place to cause the name of His honourable Son to be honoured over all the world. They, who say the preaching of the gospel bringeth not the good news of pardon to every guilty man, speak against the manifest truth of God; and those who say that it stops here, and brings not present and eternal wrath against every soul which repenteth not, do just as great dishonour to the holy gospel of our God. Now, besides the general destruction which the gospel maketh sure against every soul of man that believeth not for salvation upon the Lord Jesus Christ, it containeth a wisely adapted and nicely adjusted code of rewards or punishments, which in this present life reach us or our posterity, according to the nature of our worthiness or delinquency. And this, though it be not written as in a law-book, forasmuch as we are not under law but under grace, not under the letter which killeth, but under the Spirit which maketh alive, is righteously enforced upon those, who altogether refuse to stand under grace, or coming under it, are not careful to shelter and shield themselves beneath its canopy, from the lightnings of the law which fly without and all around the ark of salvation. Now this code is not adjusted upon

any artificial system, like that of Moses, or like those of the nations, but hath its operation in the seat of life, inducing disease and death, and entailing them upon our posterity, or in the laws of providence bringing on adversity and abandonment of God and men, or in the soul itself, leading it into darkness and delusion and despair. Deep seated in the being and constitution of nature is the scheme of God's corrective discipline, and vindictive judgment, which His revealed word doth not alter but only reveal, which outward observation and inward reflection likewise can notice and confirm. And conjecture can go a good way beyond the grave into the invisible regions of our being; which revelation doth open and display, not as a new system in addition to the former, but as the same system carried on by the same unchangeable God. He who lays down his life for Christ's sake gains a better life in the world to come; he who meekly contenteth himself with the smallness of his portion, envying not the rich and fretting himself not with worldly ambition, but diligently seeking and quietly waiting for the kingdom of heaven, doth inherit the earth as a king and a priest. And in one word, Christ absent from His dominion, and hidden from the sight of men, will, when He comes again to possession, hold exactly such an inquest upon our faithfulness to His name and rights and injured cause, as a just king would upon being replaced upon his father's throne, after having endured exile for a season. It is all ordered, I mean to say, upon principles of justice, which man well enough apprehendeth and approveth. The knowledge is new but perfectly comprehensible, and the things taught are harmonious with the pre-established laws of the human mind, with the principles of our creation, with the image of God stamped upon us, to which we are still conscious, though deprived of its enjoyment and exercise by the tyranny of sin and Satan. And what, then, is the righteous retribution which by the laws of the Divine Providence is visited upon a pastor who forgets his first works, and falls from his first love? It is what reason would suggest, the falling away of that charge which he hath neglected and forsaken; and with it the falling away of his own glory and dignity, as the divinely appointed head and watchman thereof.

"Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." This threatening, in as far as the connexion between the star and the candlestick, the angel and the Church, is concerned, so as that the one should be, in all points, taken as responsible for all the conditions of the other, we have already explained under the first division of the epistle, its inscription; and it only remains that we should further explain what

is the precise nature of the thing threatened; and apply it for the warning of all the ministers, and the instruction of all the churches which are found falling away from their first love.

Now it seems to me to speak its own meaning. The *candlestick* is the Church; *his* candlestick was that Church which had its place in Ephesus: to remove *his candlestick* out of *its place*, is to remove the Church from Ephesus. This is the exact and literal interpretation, that the light of His Church which God had set up in that city should go down in that city, and be there set up no more. How it was to be suppressed is not said: Christ simply declares that He would come and suppress it quickly. By comparing the style of this with the style of the other threatenings, we may, however, gather some information, at least of a negative kind, with respect to the method in which the judgment was to be carried into effect. That upon the Church of Pergamos is, (ver. 16,) "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth." This, from the explanation given of the symbol of the sword, (Lect. III. p. 215,) conveys to us acts of bloodshed, to the end of rooting up that Church altogether: and as we have often said, that the very use of these several epistles is to give seven distinct characteristic forms of ecclesiastical condition, instruction, and judgment, we surely believe that one of them will not repeal another; but that they will be specific, each of its proper case; we therefore conclude that this is not the method of proceeding against the Church in Ephesus. By the same method of reasoning, we obtain from the consideration of the threatening against the Church in Thyatira, (ver. 22;) that it is not by sore and severe tribulations, and many calamitous visitations that the Ephesian Church is to be visited, nor yet by a sudden and unexpected blow, as in the case of the Church in Sardis, (iii. 3,) nor yet by intolerable nauseating rejection, as in that of Laodicea, (iii. 16.) How then? In my view of it, there remains only one other method, that of gradual consumption, and decline of the Church, until it shall be no more seen. And this seems in unison with the cause which brings on the visitation, namely, the declension of love. As love is the cause both of generation and of regeneration, whereby children are born to men and to God, so the decline of love is made to be followed with the decline of increase: the family diminishes until at length it dies out altogether. This seems to me to be the natural and proper idea conveyed by the removal of a candlestick out of its place, and as such we shall consider it.

Here, then, is the retribution established by the all-wise and all-directing providence of God, upon a pastor whose love to Christ is

on the wane, that Christ will cease to send him increase of his flock, will send him decrease of it, until at length it shall waste away to nothing, and be found no more. This reveals the great principle upon which Christ makes churches to prosper, namely, the love which the pastor bears to the Lord Jesus Christ; which, as we have already shown, is only fully expressed by the love of the sheep. I say fully expressed, because Christ's love to men in general, which was very great, is not co-equal nor co-extensive with His love to the Church. "*Therefore* the Father loveth me, because I give my live for the sheep," (John x.) "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world," (John xvii.) And it is so written because the Father's love to the election to the Church is a greater love than He beareth to the world. For the world He gives His Son, whom the world rejecteth; this rejection He forgiveth in the election, and by His love bringeth them to receive and enjoy Him, to be blessed and glorified with Him: "That the world may know that thou hast loved *them, as thou hast loved me*," (John xvii. 23.) Now, this the Father's love, this love of Christ, love in the highest mood, the pastor is called to bear to the Church, and to propagate through the Church; and as he doth so, so shall increase be given to him, and splendour and majesty. Not the love of the evangelist merely, who proclaims a crucified Redeemer unto a guilty world, who proclaims pardon to a condemned world, with that earnestness of love with which the Father gave His Son, and the Son gave Himself; but the love of a pastor who to those in the Church that are lending only a deaf ear to his ministry, and cold of heart, doth, so far from resenting it, go away and cherish them in his bosom, and clasp their benumbed feelings; with fond love, bearing and loving, forbearing and loving. Such affection, I say, even such affection as was manifested on the day of Pentecost by the shedding down of the Holy Ghost upon the thousands of that city which had put Him to death; this, even this, is the diligence in which a Church shall have many sons born unto her, and shall flourish more and more in the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the favour of her great Head.

But if otherwise it be, as otherwise it is in so many cases around me, no matter what be in the stead of love: be there eloquence, it shall be like the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal; be there learning, it shall be moth-eaten, and turn to pride and bigotry; be there zeal for truth, it shall breed controversy and coldness; be there honour and honesty, it shall end in the applause and esteem of the world; be there state and dignity, it shall issue in resistance and contempt; be there social kindness, it shall breed hospitality

and charity: but not one of them shall beget children to God; nothing shall brighten and burnish the candlestick, nothing shall fill the house with light, but love; the love which the Father beareth to His own, the love which the Head of the Church beareth to the Father's election,—such love let a pastor keep warm at his heart, and let this be the spring of all his exertions, let this make him eloquent, learned, faithful, and unsparing in the truth, honest, and honourable, and dignified, and kind; and he shall not see his flock declining away under his hand, but he shall rejoice in its increase; yea, and of its increase he shall partake; and if so be that he hath come in upon a flock thus declining under the indifference and coldness of a former minister, he shall by this means stay the consumption, restore the life, and recover a congregation from being lost unto the Church. Oh, what a lesson this is to my brethren and me! God hath written it strong upon my conviction. I know it, and I feel it. Now may He give me grace to reduce it to practice, and mercifully forgive my shortcoming and transgression in the times of my ignorance. For never, O God! as thou knowest, till I studied this vision, did I know these things as I now know them; double, yea tenfold will be my guilt, if I do not give to all my brethren the example of a pastor's love.

One word more, before leaving this important topic, upon the extent of that love. Doubtless it begins with our own flock, and hath its centre and its focus there; but not there hath it its boundary. It doth, however, gather its oil and its fuel thence, and it resteth thereon for its support; but from thence it sendeth the light of its beams and the radiation of its heat to the widest distances, always affecting and cheering the Church first, and thence passing outward into the world. The Church glows with its own inbred heat of love, and radiates forth light and heat upon the cold bosom of the world around. The pastors of the Church are like so many burners, which together constitute the one light of the Church, which is that polar star of the world's course. The pastors of the Church are like so many live coals, which together constitute the furnace of the Church, and melt out the gold from the dross of the world, that it may be cast into the various pieces of the cherubim, whereon the glory of the Lord shall for ever rest: "That they may be made perfect in one, *that the world may know* that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Much, much my mind moveth me to say upon this subject; but let me never forget that I am doing the office of an interpreter, and not of a preacher. The Spirit of God be the preacher of these great truths to the hearts of my dear brethren, the angels of the churches.

Having thus admonished the bishop of the Church in Ephesus, of his shortcoming in love, the cardinal virtue of a pastor, the Great Bishop returneth to His more congenial mood of commendation; giving us therein a beautiful example of how much He loved, and with this He endeth His charge.

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Who these Nicolaitanes were, hath been a subject of no small disputation with commentators. The fathers who wrote on heresies, as Irenæus, Augustine, and Epiphanius, distinguish them as those who divided between Jesus and Christ, alleging Jesus to have been a mere man, upon whom the Christ of God descended at His baptism, and removed from Him again before His passion, enabling and informing him for His words and works, but not abiding with Him for ever, nor united in one person with Him for ever, as the orthodox Church hath always believed. It was a common opinion, even in the days of Clemens Alexandrinus, as it is not infrequently in these times, that this heresy had its origin from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons, who was a proselyte of Alexandria. Which notion, the father above named, rejects and refutes in these words, which I translate from the Second Book of the Stromata, page 413. Where describing some of the sensualities of the Gnostic school of heretics, he thus speaks:—"Such, however, likewise are those who say that they follow Nicolas, wresting something transmitted from that man, to the effect that we ought to exorcise the flesh. But that famous man signified that we ought to forbid pleasures and passions, and by such exercise weaken the impulses and inclinations of the flesh: but they, &c. &c. (here follows a picture of their sensuality) . . . . . following the dogma of their lust, and not of the apostolical man. In what do such differ from Sardanapalus," &c. And in another place of the third book, page 436, he again defends him from all connexion in any way with these impure sensualities. And the same do other of the fathers. From these passages we gather, that like all heretical pravities, it descended from doctrine into action, and brought them into a condition beneath the brutes that perish; of which if you would have a particular description, read it in the Epistle of Jude. There is a curious criticism upon this term Nicolaitanes, by Eichhorn, a German divine of the Neological school, more remarkable for its ingenuity than its soundness; namely, That the word Nicolaitanes in the Greek is a translation of a word in the Hebrew, Balaamites,—being derived from the root Balaám, the name of the deceitful prophet, signifying "Conqueror of the People," the same which Nicolas signifies in the Greek; and his idea is, that the term Nicolaitanes is not descriptive of any

heretical sect in particular, but of the false prophets in general, who, like Balaam, misled the people, and were briefly called, from their great leader, Balaamites, which, rendered into Greek by the word that properly translates it, is Nicolaitanes. This is very ingenious, and also very true in the principle of it; and would, I think, be worthy of all acceptation, as giving a more dignified sense: for the leaders of heresies did infinitely abound, and wonderfully mislead the people. And could I get over the authority of all antiquity, and the circumstance of its being mentioned, (ver. 15,) in addition to the mention of the Balaamites, I would gladly adopt it. But perceiving that the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is set forth as another thing from the doctrine of Balaam, I think it safer to rest in the ordinary interpretation given above.

What the works of the Nicolaitanes were, we learn from the passages of Clement already referred to; indulgences of the sense in every form: not merely the natural inclinations of the flesh, for such is the condition in which the gospel looks to find all men, but these inclinations perverting the truth of Christ Jesus unto their own use, and sanctifying themselves under the pretence of pleasing and serving God. In the first ages of Christianity, there was no sense of decorum and decency such as now exists in Christendom; no bounds or moderation either to the sensual inclinations or ambitious revengeful dispositions of men. There was no influence of good custom, nor awe of public opinion, to preserve men from running into all possible excesses and extravagances. It is one of the benefits which the gospel hath conferred upon the world, to have constituted written and unwritten laws, customs of temperance, the sense of modesty, and the feeling of honour; and, in one word, that common sense of what is becoming to every station and office of life, all which influences together working do train us up under their wholesome influence to obedience, and prevent us from those wild and wide excesses into which it is the nature of every passion to carry its unhappy votary. Nothing of all this influence counteracted the natural workings of men's minds in those ancient times. Let any one read the form of human character, as it was exhibited in Rome from the days of Marius and Sylla, onward to the days of Domitian, and remember that Rome was for self-command like the Great Britain of the world which then was, being nothing so huge in its vices as the Greeks and Asiatics; or let him study it as it is exhibited in the familiar letters of Cicero, or by any other writer of these times; or let him take it from the strong contrasts which are to be found in the apologies of the Fathers of the first and second centuries; or let him take it from the epistles of St Paul, which is infallible authority; and

he will have some notion of the fearful scope which men gave not to their natural lusts only, but even to those which are against nature. When such men therefore being brought into the Church outwardly, were not baptized inwardly with the Holy Ghost, their natural inclinations, the will of the flesh, strove against the discipline of the Church with an impetuosity of which we cannot even have a conception. And because an evil heart can corrupt any form of truth, these terrible forms of wickedness to which the hearts of men were familiar in those rank times, did engender most fearful corruptions of the truth, whereof in these Christian times we have not an example or even an idea. In reading the history of the Eucharist, the most holy of our mysteries, my hair has almost stood on end to know the awful things which certain of the Gnostics were wont to practise; and I have too much regard for the purity of my reader's imagination to give them expression. Now it was necessary to reconcile these sensual indulgences in some way or other to the name of Christian; for Satan did not bring these servants of his into the Church for nought; for his highest end of dishonouring the name of Christ, and prejudicing men against that communion, under the cover of which such fearful things were transacted. He then began to show himself as Antichrist, or the opponent of Christ. Now no one could doubt that the Christian religion insisteth upon self-denial on this side the resurrection; because, till then, the will of the flesh is against the will of the Spirit, but after the resurrection it is as true that the will of the flesh will be conformed to the will of the Spirit, and therefore restraint shall last no longer, because there will be no disposition in the body to sin. It was one of the chief acts of Satan, therefore, to delude his votaries into the notion that the resurrection was past already; and this he succeeded in doing, as is evident from many parts of the apostolical writings. Nor is it so difficult as some imagine. How many of our evangelical people do confound the first resurrection with the regeneration of the soul which is promised and assured to the believer in baptism? Do they not all do it? This is the very thing which Satan succeeded in doing for these primitive teachers; and this done, the Rubicon was passed. For then the first resurrection, which in the primitive times was the only resurrection that a believer cared about, being passed, as these heretics imagined, they were living in the thousand years of enjoyment during which they were to possess and enjoy and rule the world. Add to this the continual declarations made unto faith of our being already risen with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage: the declarations that to the pure all things are pure, and

that in the Church there is neither male nor female: translate the truth of faith into truth of sense, and what have you but the sanctification of all indulgences as the highest attainment of the Divine life: and being thus deluded, they contemned as in bondage all who did not go to the same excess of riot with themselves. They had all things in common, they rioted in all excess: they defiled the flesh, despised dominion, and spake evil of dignities, and followed after a thousand wicked courses, which we cannot enumerate, but refer to, as contained in, the Epistles of Peter and Jude.

It was in the Church that all these things arose: in the Churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, and I may say in every Church, for these persons are noticed in almost every epistle. What was to be done? Our Lord had given the canon, that the ultimate appeal was to the Church herself, and if they refused to hear the Church, then must they be to us as heathen men and publicans. But these perverters of the way of godliness arising, as was most commonly the case, amongst those who were of chief repute; as, for instance, the excommunicated person in the Corinthian Church, and Diotrephes, and Alexander the coppersmith, and Hymeneus, and Philetus, many angels or ministers would be afraid to take prompt measures against them, and many would by their love be disinclined to take severe ones. And now love is brought to Christ's own test of obeying His commandments. His commandments are to regard such men as heathen men and publicans, after the first and second admonition to reject them. But hope would linger over them, and charity would be ever construing things favourably; so that no case could occur of so trying and proving a kind as this which did occur in most of these churches. And therefore no wonder that our Lord in these charges should so oft make remarks approving or disapproving their behaviour in this respect. For as it bore upon the prosperity of His Church it was a point of the utmost importance. If these persons are retained, the Church loseth its character of making a distinction between the evil and the good. If Christ's name is to be taken as the sanction of evil as well as of good, how is He to be known as the Holy One of God: if His disciples are not to be distinguished by their purity and holiness, their faith of truth, and their rejection of falsehood, then how are they to teach and exemplify the word and worship of God to nations lying in wickedness? If darkness is to mingle with the light, then is the light swallowed up; and the Church is no longer the candlestick of purest gold. On every account, therefore, it was necessary that the bishop of the churches

into whose hands the government is committed, should detect these deep delusions and inventions and abominable practices of the devil. As a star, he must ever shine in the true light of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor suffer these clouds to obscure him. Highly worthy in every point of view was it of Christ's observation, whether His angels hated or tolerated those abominations which Satan sought to introduce into the Church.

The angel of the Church in Ephesus did hate these practices, and he is praised for it. It was not want of discernment of doctrine, nor yet of exercise of discipline he was blamed, but simply for want of love, declension of love; proving, as we have said, that all the outward forms of the Church may be standing in their just and due proportions, and yet the only thing for which these are valuable as containing the soul and essence of love, may be wasting, may gradually decay; profession continue; yea and many apparent followers of the Church: while she is dying away, and soon to be cut off from being a Church, soon to be rooted out from her place, and the place which now knows her, to know her no more.

III. We now come to the third constituent part of which these epistles consist, which is a word of exhortation to the churches. That to the Ephesian Church is couched in these terms: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." In considering this annunciation of the Spirit affixed to our Bishop's charge to His angel of the Church in Ephesus, we shall first treat of that part of it which is common to all the epistles; and, secondly, of that which is peculiar to this one. The former subject will open to us the general scope and intention of this constituent part of the epistles, and the latter will point our attention to that which is peculiar to each; according to this method we have to consider,—

First, what is to be gathered from these words, with which all the Spirit's admonitions are prefaced? "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," &c. Upon this I observe, first, That the speaker is the Spirit and not the Son of man, nor yet any of the angels who minister to Him in the revealing of these visions. Besides the seven instances of this vision, I find only two other places in this book where any word is put into the mouth of the Spirit; the one of which is in chap. xiv. 13: "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their

works do follow them." And the other is in chap. xxii. 17, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." In the former of these two instances we can see, without entering at large into the passage which is an extremely difficult one, that the matter of the Spirit's explanation is the supplement or rather the counterpart of what is contained in the seven texts under consideration. In these texts His word is of earnest and strong controversy, and promiseth some excellent reward to every one who overcometh therein; but here His word is of rest,—"that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them;" their labours are concluded, and their rest is come. It would seem from these texts, that it is the office of the Spirit to encourage the churches in their conflict, and to give them rest when their works are ended: and this answers to the name of Comforter, and the office of abiding continually with us, as the representative of Christ, to teach, and to admonish, and to comfort the Church, until He who is our life shall appear. In the other passage quoted above, the Spirit and the bride are represented as invoking the Lord to come. Now the bride, or the Church which is the temple of the Spirit, is another name for what in this vision is called the seven churches, or the churches. And the Spirit is represented as a distinct witness from the Church, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." This agrees with the language used of the three witnesses, (1 John v.,) of whom the Spirit is one: and with the language used by Paul (Rom. viii.) of the Spirit, "The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit;" and again, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Gathering, then, from these passages that it is the Holy Ghost who is here denominated the Spirit, and that it is His office to witness in the Church, and also to witness to the Church, we return to our subject with this information in general, that as it is Christ's personal office to inform and instruct His ministers, or to speak unto the angels of the churches, so is it the Spirit's personal office to speak unto the churches. This is a conclusion of which we have already made use, in speaking of the general structure of this vision; and therefore, at present, we do but repeat it with these confirmations.

There is, however, one thing which we ought to add: That this witness of the Spirit in the churches, is that which, more than everything else, doth constitute their unity, according to the word of the apostle, (Eph. iv. 3–6,) "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit,

even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And the sin of schism, therefore, cannot but be a great grief to the Holy Spirit, being indeed a direct offence against His unity, and therefore greatly to be abhorred. I do not say that it is the sin against the Holy Ghost; but that it is a way leading unto that fearful abyss is manifest from Heb. xi. 25, where the sin of separating from the congregation draws the apostle immediately onward to speak of the irrecoverable fall. I am not here called upon to say who at present are, and who are not indulging the guilt of this sin. I believe the Reformers were guiltless of it in their great act; that the Church of Rome was guilty of it in the most violent form; that the Church of England first, and the Church of Scotland afterwards fell somewhat into the same offence, from which they have not yet recovered; and that the spirit which now sways Dissenters and Seceders, and indeed almost all men, commonly called enlightened and liberal, is essentially and almost thoroughly schismatical: and I only wonder, amidst such violations of love as we are guilty of one towards another, that God should continue with us that little of His Spirit which remains. It is in the power, however, of every private Christian, and minister also, in his soul to escape away from under the influence of this narrow spirit, and to seek, yea, and to have communion with every one who loves the Lord Jesus, and walketh after His commandments: and when we are hindered by our duty to the churches, we must submit to the privation and count it a trial from our God, in the midst of infinite blessings which we enjoy at their hand. But as to separating from them, or setting up another head, see if the hint of such a thing can be found in all these epistles to churches fallen, some of them into the most grievous conditions. According as we are obedient to the Church even in her frowardness, (so that we do not follow her into any denial of the truth as it is in Jesus,) and mourn over her imperfections and violences to her children, so do we demonstrate that the Spirit is speaking in us, and so shall we receive new revelations of His blessed mind.

The next question is, To whom doth the Spirit address these exhortations? To the churches. Not now to the seven churches, nor to the Church in Ephesus; but to the churches, to the whole bride of the Lamb, the complete number of the Father's election. This is the scope and range of the Spirit's words, even to the Church universal, in all places and in all times subsisting; and is well fitted to guard against the misinterpretation of the vision, by applying it to a portion of the Christian Church, whether in respect of name or in

respect of place. To teach the Church that all and every one of these epistles are meant for universal instruction and application, though in each one person only be addressed, an integrant part of each hath the whole width of the Spirit's voice and influence. And how wide this is, may be seen from the Second Epistle of Peter; in the first chapter of which, having given the saints to understand that there was a subject near his heart, which he would take order the churches should remember, not during his lifetime, but after his decease, (ver. 15,) he informs them, (ver. 16,) what it was, The power and coming of our Lord Jesus; and maintains its truth and certainty from having seen the form of it on the holy mount (ver. 17;) and from having it continually set forth in the prophetic word, which by the transfiguration was made more firm. Thus, being brought to speak of the prophetic word as a witness to the glorious and majestic appearance of the Lord Christ, he not only commendeth it, as the only light in the darkness of intervening time which had to run, but denies that any part of that prophecy was of private interpretation, so as ever to be worn out and done with, but that it is as precious and full of information to us as it was to those to whom it was delivered, forasmuch as there is no prophecy of the Scripture which doth not testify of the power, and coming, and kingdom of Jesus Christ. Now mark the reason assigned for this universal application of the prophecy: "it came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Therefore, concludeth Peter, it is not of private interpretation either to men or to ages, but of universal application to all men and ages. Wherefore? because it is the voice of the Holy Ghost. If the Holy Ghost could speak any word of prophecy of a narrow range and smaller compass than to all ages, Peter's argument were wholly set aside. But because it is the office of the Holy Ghost to do nothing else, but to testify of Jesus, it must follow that until Jesus come and testify of Himself; or rather, until He come and need no testimony of word, but by sight be apparent, by constituted kingdom be felt all over the world, as the acts and ordinances of a king are seen and felt in those who represent him; until His second coming, the Spirit will occupy himself with no meaner work than to testify of Him to all the churches, to every man who hath an ear to hear. If any one should think that the Spirit hath any lower, or any other object besides or beyond testifying of Christ, let him hear what the Lord himself declareth in those promises which introduced the Spirit to the Church, and defined His office in the Divine economy of the world's redemption. It is a most pregnant passage, a very anchor of the orthodox faith, (John xvi. 13,) "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of

truth is come, He will guide you into all truth:" and wherefore may He be relied on as the anointing which abideth, and which is no lie? "for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak:" He shall testify of me, as I testified of the Father, of me who am the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but truth; a listener to me, as the reporter of me shall He ever show Himself, whose only occupation is to testify of the Father and the Son. All the truth which I have taught you, He shall bring to your remembrance; He shall water and fructify the seed which I have sown; and what I dimly set forth in parables, He shall make bright as the noon-day, "and He shall shew you things to come:" before they come to pass, He shall give you timeous admonition by means of the ministry of the word, and in the observance of my holy ordinances. "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you;" adding nothing new of His own, for the fulness of wisdom and knowledge is in me, for the fulness of the Godhead is in me. And if any one come in the name of the Spirit, setting aside my ordinances, or superseding anything which I have commanded, or pretending to further revelations, (as Montanus, Mohammed, and others,) they are liars and blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, and shall perish in the unpardonable sin. For "all things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." The Father hath given all power in heaven and earth to me, all wisdom, all knowledge, and the Holy Ghost hath condescended like the Father to exalt me, and to glorify me, and to testify only of me. Therefore, fear not these false prophets, which will come arrayed unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; even as the same John who recorded this glorious truth doth declare, (1 John ii. 20,) "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." And again, (ver. 26, 27:) "These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie: and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." These further illustrations of the office of the Holy Ghost will convince every sound-minded, and right-hearted believer, of these two fundamental truths, that the Holy Ghost never hath had, and never can have any other object in inspiring men, or revealing unto men, than to testify of Jesus; and that all the Scriptures are for this one and only end, and to this one and only use to be ap-

plied: and likewise that the vision of the Spirit is to all generations of men, until the time that Christ shall come and possess the whole world with His presence, and power, and authority: after which the Holy Ghost shall have accomplished His office of ministering to the absent *Word;* and shall begin to minister to the present King, as the seven Spirits which are before His throne. Concerning which more hereafter in the proper place.

From these premises, I do see a very pregnant significancy, and great importance to these words, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," which stand between this epistle of the Lord to His angel, and the great promise to every one who overcometh. Observe that in the first three instances they stand between; in the four last they stand after all, as it were soliciting the heed of all men, and all churches, to what hath been spoken in the epistle, and sealing it up with the seal of the Spirit. This diversity of location hath exercised my mind a good deal; for I have gotten such a reverence for the book, as to believe that there is nothing in it accidental, but that it is a perfect device of consummate wisdom. But before giving my judgment upon this matter, and the grounds of it, I must close these general remarks upon the Spirit as the speaker, and the whole Church of God as spoken to, with a solemn appeal to every believer, of how much importance these seven epistles must be, which are thus awfully attested, and how necessary to the well-being of the Church must they be; how pregnant of matter, how prolific of good! I cannot enough wonder, nor can I well understand how Christian men and ministers can put these invocations and attestations away from them; I cannot, I dare not. I am sure it is for want of thought, and not for want of reverence of the Holy Ghost: for truly I neither could nor durst call the man brother, be he who he may, my bosom-friend, my teacher, my own father, the wife of my bosom, who hearing these solemn citations of the Spirit seven times over, would yet give no heed, and encourage others in the like heedlessness. I say again, I believe it is want of thought, and not a determined purpose of resisting the Holy Ghost. Be entreated then, O men; be entreated, O ministers; be entreated, O churches; be entreated, O every one that heareth, to give good heed to these seven epistles, which in such most solemn wise the Spirit sealeth. And now with this exhortation to the Church which I love, and for which I believe my God would give me strength any day to die, I proceed upon my way.

Wherefore this solemnest of the seals of God, the Holy Spirit's witness, should three times be placed between the epistle and the promise, and four times after all, I have said is a question which hath exercised my mind much, though to many it may seem of

little consequence: and this is what I have come to as the best account of the matter. By being three times interposed in the middle, it hath the effect of separating the promise, and giving it a universal application to all members of the Church, and to all people that dwell on the earth, and to every creature, who have the faculty of understanding rational speech; whereas, if it had stood last in all the epistles, we should not have been so clear or decided on this point, but have been puzzled between the inscription unto one person, called the angel of the Church, and the conclusion addressed unto all intelligent creatures. And the likelihood is, that some would have interpreted it as all spoken to the ministers, merely in the audience of the churches, and others would have interpreted it as all spoken to the churches, but merely in the person of their ministers; and so the distinctness of the ministers from the churches would have been lost; which it is the great object of the vision to preserve, and present in its true aspect, and in all its bearings. Now this confusion is prevented by the first three being in the form and order in which they stand. And what is gained by setting this order aside in the four last? This, I think, is gained, that as well what is spoken to the ministry, as what is spoken to all the people, receives the awful seal and sanction of the Holy Ghost; is sent abroad with heaven's sign manual, and proclaimed with heaven's great trumpet through the peopled world.—Secondly, As hath been already hinted, the visions do thereby receive that general, that universal application to all the churches in Christendom, in all time, until the Lord's coming with all His saints, which we have been pleading for all along, and have demonstrated from so many quarters. Had there not been these four instances in which the Spirit doth bespeak and summon the attention of mankind to what had been spoken in the previous epistle, it might have been maintained that there was a portion only of universal application, and a portion of particular application to the angels of the churches, or even only to the angels of the particular Church. Of such a theory, and of all theories of the like kind, such as that they symbolise seven successive ages in the Church, like the series of the seven seals and trumpets, the very possibility is to my mind set aside by the four instances in which all that hath been said is sealed and signed, and directed to all mankind.—Thirdly, While the special application to the ministry of the first, and chief part of each epistle, is not set aside, nor can be frustrated as being specially addressed to us, the ministers, the attention of all the churches, and of all mankind, is directed upon us as occupying this pre-eminent state, and fulfilling these intermediate relations between the Universal Bishop and His flock; between the Universal Judge

and all mankind, between the WORD of God and the ear of man. I say not of how much importance this is, or how awfully it is now forgotten, despised, and set at naught as rank Papistry. But, O men, it is the truth, and ye cannot by your unbelief and gainsaying set it aside. "Let him that hath an ear, hear it."—Fourthly, By this alteration, it is moreover signified, that what place Christ appoints to His members, what words He speaks to them, are not for them as individual persons, but for the churches: "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Yea, and that the Church itself with all its ministry, and its ordinances is for the unconverted world a sign whereby they may know that Jesus is the sent of God, and that as God hath loved His son, so hath He loved us, and will to the share of His glory advance us. And this I may observe also, is the reason why not the churches only, but the unconverted world is taken in. But this is a matter of so much importance, that I must make of it a distinct topic. Let these suffice for the good reasons wherefore the Spirit doth make the change of locating these common words: "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

At the risk of being thought prolix in this introductory matter, which be it observed we shall not have again to go over in any of the other epistles, (and methinks a text seven times repeated, is worthy of some minute study and attention,) I add another observation upon the verse, to explain why every ear should be summoned to the thing which is spoken to the churches. This is twofold; first, to give it the form of the most concerning truth which God can utter. For this form, "He that hath an ear to hear," always is used of radical, and as it were generative truths, great principles, most precious promises, most deep fetches from the secrets of God, being as it were eyes of truth, seeds and kernels of knowledge.—Let me refer to a few instances, first in the Gospels, and then in the Revelation. When the Lord would teach the people that they were even at that time to expect no Elias, but the Baptist, which was the rock they were driving on; "How then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" when He was striking at the great stumbling-block of the nation, he used this expression, (Matt. xi. 14, 15,) "And if you will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." When He was laying out, by the parable of the sower, the most concerning truth, that the word of the preacher in his or any one's mouth, would not, nor could not of itself, work salvation without the soil of an honest heart, wrought within us by God's good Spirit, and that for want of believing and looking for this, that generation

of His hearers were in peril of being ruined for ever, yea, and all generations to whom that parable should come, He closes with the same words, (Matt. xiii. 9,) "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." And in the continuance of that same discourse, when He comes to speak of the things of reward and judgment attendant upon His second advent, He seals it with the same vehement invocation of all ears, (ver. 43,) "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." And to quote one other instance from those most venerable lips, which spake as never man spake, when He would, with one word, overthrow the whole fabric of outward ceremonies, as a ground of justification or a proof of sanctification, and set the question of our sinfulness upon its true basis of the wicked heart, the rebellious will, the depraved and the seduced affections, the devil-oppressed soul, behold with what art of a teacher's care He beginneth it, with what words of a teacher's authority He closeth it, (Mark vii. 14–17,) "And when He had called all the people unto Him, He said unto them, Hearken unto me, every one of you, and understand. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." Let these quotations from the Gospels suffice to prove, of what authority and weight in the vocabulary of the Spirit these words are, "Who hath ears to hear." And now I will take one from the Book of the Revelation, which as it is the key-book of the whole Scriptures, is especially the key-book of its own structure. It occurs in the bosom of that fearful vision of the Papal supremacy for the long, long period of time, times, and half a time, or twelve hundred and sixty prophetical days, or common years. To support the hearts of the saints during that long and dreary waste of time, and to carry their attention forward to the sure perdition of the beast and the false prophet their oppressors; and of the king, who at His command did slay them with the sword, (for the magistrate doth wear the sword,) which twofold doom of captivity and slaughter to the anti-christian beast, false prophet or mouth, and to the kings or horns, is realised in chap. xix. 20, 21; the Lord doth hold out for the support of His saints during that fearful day of Papal darkness and oppression, this promise prefaced with the seal of authority, (Rev. xiii. 9, 10,) "If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." And let these suffice for proof of the importance of every promise or utterance to which these solemn words stand pre-

fixed. But this is only with respect to the form. And now, secondly, with respect to the substance of the expression here used, and in answer to the question why it should be addressed to the churches, and at the same time all ears be invoked to it, we observe,

That as the candlestick hath existence not for itself alone, but for the house in which it is placed, and for the people who are therein; so the Church in its collective unity hath not its being for itself alone, but for the world replete with God's creatures, for every one of whom it is appointed as a light to lighten every man that cometh into the world. God so loved the world, that He sent His only beloved Son to give His life for the remission of its sin; and on what errand the Father sent Christ, on that same errand Christ sendeth all who believe in Him. His Church is but the continuation with advantages, the extension and diffusion of that work, for which the Father sanctified Him and sent Him into the world. And this is not the office of the Church in this present evil world only, but for ever and ever shall we stand to Christ and to all creation in this same middle place, of communicating between them; He the light, we the lamp which holds it up, and away from which it is not seen: He the Head, and we the body, through the members of which the intelligent Head carries its wishes into effect: He the King and Husband, we the queen and wife, who taketh charge of the house and the children, teaching them all to call Him Father, the second Adam, and to obey Him as the Head over all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come. These being the true views of the Church, as a body of men trained in the school of His humility, and brought unto the fellowship of His glory, to be unto God the monument of His grace; and unto Christ the evidence of His unspeakable love; and unto the Spirit for the body of His witnesses to all the other orders of creation, which are, or which are to be; it becomes at once manifest why the word, which is spoken to them, should also be spoken to every one that hath an ear to hear. It is spoken to the Church for their sake, that she, by declaring the same, may testify God's goodness to the sons of men, who may thereby be left without rebuke, if they put not their trust under the shadow of His wings; and by such a method of speech, the Church is at once reminded of her special propriety in the gifts of God, and of the ends of universal communication for which she hath them in trust; while the world—that is, every living creature—is reminded of the good purpose which God hath towards them in all that He doth, and of the Church as the appointed channel through which that good is to be received. This form of expression, "He that hath an

ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," is exactly parallel with these two verses of our Lord's sermon on the mount, "Ye are the light of the world . . . . let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Oh that the Church thus used the grace of election which she hath exclusively received, as Christ did the same dignity of being the chosen one, in giving His life for the world, though a Son, and the only Son, learning the obedience of a servant by the things which she suffereth, how blessed a doctrine then would election be! And how profitable, not only to the dignity and enlargement of our souls, but to the knowledge and profit of the wicked world, saying ever, Here are we the chosen ones of God; behold in us what God doth for wretched sinners, and what wretched sinners can through grace be made to do for God. See this, O ye sons of men, what for the sons of men He doeth, and what He enableth the sons of men to do for their brethren. But when we remember our election, and forget our calling to die for the world, election fostereth up the spirit of pride and schism, and towards others the spirit of contempt and contumely, and is punished as the Jew hath been punished, who is the standing monument of the abuse of this great principle of the Church, to the ends of self-sufficiency and arrogancy towards others. The doctrine of election is the formative life of the Church, which being thereby conformed unto life, is bound at all times to lay down that life for the wicked world; to prove how much God doth ever love, doth ever long over them. Election is the fallen creature's acknowledgment that he owes his rise again, his life again, wholly to the grace of God, free and unpurchased, sovereign and unclaimed. Christ acted this principle continually, living by faith on the Father's unconditionate faithfulness, and through His perfect faith therein, and unconditional compliance to His will, and continual surrender of His own will, did attain to the reward which is of faith to the end it may be of work also. Therefore Christ is the chosen one, the great Election Head: and whoso would walk in His footsteps, must walk in the blessed light of election, every day and every hour, saying evermore, "Not my will, but thine be done. There is a depth and a simplicity in these great truths which far surpass my utterance; but my soul keeps them company so far as my wing can stretch, and ever I see blessed light and hear sweet harmony. It is the light of God's countenance which I see in the face of Jesus Christ; and it is the song of God's mercy and love which I ever hear in every word which His lips do utter; and the good Spirit hath attuned my heart to delight in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. For which,

glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

Having thus once for all enlarged upon those words which are common to the third constituent part of these seven epistles, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," we now come to treat particularly of that which is proper to the Church in Ephesus, couched in these terms: "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." This naturally divides itself into two parts: the first, the promise; and the second, to whom the promise is made; of both which we will discourse in order.

Concerning the promise, "I will give him to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God," there are two points chiefly requiring to be treated of. First, what is this tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God? and, secondly, what is this eating of it, which is promised to him that overcometh? Now, before entering upon these great subjects I have one observation to make which beautifully connecteth it with the preceding parts of the epistle, and may serve to revive the memory of what hath been said, and to keep up the unity which is observable in the parts of each of these epistles. The inscription of it, the character under which Christ chooses to write it, is that generic one of the Bishop of the ministers, and the Pastor of the churches, who sets each star in its place, each light in its candlestick, and trims them evermore, as He walketh up and down amongst them. The body of the epistle again explains the character of the angel, as a pastor commendeth his diligence and patience, in feeding the flock, his watchfulness in keeping out the wolf, and lamenteth over the declension of his love to the great Shepherd of the sheep, and to the sheep for whom He gave His life, and threatens to break His pastoral staff and bring dishonour, and decline, and death upon His flock. But now being minded to encourage every one of His sheep, both pastor and people, he doth it by the assurance of an abundant pasture from the source and fountain of life, that He will feed them from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God; that He will Himself be the Pastor of those sheep and of those shepherds, who stand steadfast unto the end, and overcome as He overcame. And accordingly we have the thing realised, (vii. 17,) "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." If these seven promises of the Spirit to every one that overcometh, be understood to compose the complete reward which Christ will bring with Him for all His saints, then that part of it or rather aspect of it which is preached to the Ephesian

Church is the food and nourishment of life. For life never hath been without a food. Adam had the trees of the garden, we have all herbs and flesh also for our natural life; for our spiritual, the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and here is a food presented for our eternal life, even the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God: and what is signified by this the aliment of the use and glorified saints we have now to inquire. I desire and pray, O Lord my guide, to enter upon the exposition of these pregnant utterances of thy Spirit, with the most deliberate wisdom, which I crave of thee. Oh, help thy servant to set forth the substance and the excellence of these rewards which thou holdest out to our faith: for he that cometh unto thee must believe that thou art, and that thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek thee. I trust in thee through Jesus Christ, and go on my way in thy strength.

No one can be at a loss to understand what is referred to by "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God:" for there is only one such tree mentioned in the creation of God. And it is mentioned in these words, (Gen. ii. 9,) "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." This tree of life God planted *in the midst* of the garden, and the tree of life promised as the nourishment of the victorious is *in the midst* of the Paradise of God. What connexion there is between the Garden of Eden, and the Paradise of God, is a future question; that which we draw attention to at present is that in both cases, they are *in the midst* thereof; and so I may observe of the tree of life, the only one in the new earth, is described *in the midst* of the street of the New Jerusalem, and on both sides of the river thereof, (Rev. xxii. 2,) "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Now of this tree of life let us peruse the history, and so furnish our minds for the work of an interpretation. Beside this tree of life which was planted in the midst of the Garden of Eden, there is but one other tree mentioned, which is the fatal tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon which the interdict of God was laid: and inasmuch as it was laid on that only, and full and free participation of all the rest was put in his power, ("Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou mayest not eat,") we conclude that the tree of life was for the food of man, and that he was fully privileged to have

partaken thereof. This, together with the effects which the eating of it would have produced upon him, is made clear by what is written in Gen. iii. 22–24: "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." These verses put it beyond a doubt that man was originally intended to eat of that tree of life; that the eating of it would have conveyed to him the faculty of an eternal life; and that to prevent his eating of it he was thrust out of Paradise; and to keep him out of Paradise God planted the cherubim, with a flaming sword. And thus I believe things continued until the Deluge put an end to that form of revelation, and made way for another. The antediluvians had a paradise lost before their eyes, and in it a tree of life, to which the way was not yet opened, but prevented by the cherubim: and the cause of the prevention was the loss of original righteousness, these cherubim flaming with destruction against all unrighteousness. But when to Abraham was revealed the righteousness which is by faith, the barrier was removed, and Abraham by his faith entered into everlasting life, even as we also do. And because death must be endured, God gave the seal of the resurrection in the rule of circumcision—if, indeed, that was not already given in the deliverance of the Church from the Deluge, which I rather incline to believe, from the consideration of 1 Pet. iii. 21. But however this may be, there can be no doubt that, when the new way of righteousness by faith through grace was opened up, the cherubim could not withstand the believer's approach to the tree of life, and sooner or later he must reach it and feed on it. Thus things continued till God, to curb the licence and wickedness of the chosen people, and to make His grace more precious in their sight, and the way of faith more sacred, did, without altering anything of the promise, introduce new lets and hindrances; making His presence more private, that it might be more respected; as a father doth to an irreverent child, or a sovereign to ill-disciplined subjects. When grace is trampled upon, it must, for its own defence, draw out the law, which it had hidden in its bosom, and let the culprit know what his demerit is, in order that he may know what grace is. And now, behold, the holy of holies is introduced, instead of paradise; and there is the separated dwelling-place of God; and the cherubim are there also, and for the tree of life there is the pot of manna, incorruptible food of an im-

mortal life. But the way was not now defended from all approach, for the High Priest, having in his hands the symbols of the righteousness by faith, is permitted once a year to enter in. If indeed the translation of Enoch beyond the bourne of death was, as may be well believed, the receiving him within the garden in consideration of his walking with God, then the antediluvians also had the proof that the way of the tree of life was still open. When the Man Jesus came, and, having died, arose from the dead in an immortal body, and entered within the heavens, into the presence of God, the thing which, by Enoch's translation, and the High Priest's entering once a year into the holiest, was shadowed forth, became a fully accomplished and realised thing. The fallen, interdicted substance of manhood hath prevailed to present itself blameless in the sight of God, and to win its way to immortality; and all who believe in Him that hath accomplished this work, have the same access through the veil into God's immediate presence, as it is written, (Heb. x. 18–20,) "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh," &c.

It appeareth, therefore, that by faith we receive a righteousness which removes the curse and opens the way into eternal life; which doth introduce into my being an eternal life, instead of this mortal life in which I now subsist. But still, this is not exactly the point in question; for our inquiry concerneth not so much the eternal life which is in us, as that aliment upon which it is supported. Nevertheless we thought it good and useful, to prevent all cavils at the outset of that on which we are now to enter, to allay the lynx-eyed suspicion of our orthodox brethren against us millennarians, by going into that previous question, Whence the eternal life is now derived; and the answer is, It is derived out of Christ's risen body, by faith upon Him who raised Him from the dead, that He will do so to us also. And now we have to inquire into the aliment or nourishment of this life which is the proper thing presented to us in the promise, "To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Some may say, This is merely a figure for the resurrection of the body. But this cannot be entertained; for if we look back to the tree of life in paradise, it was not for the giving of life, seeing God breathed into Adam's "nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul;" but it was for the support of that life which had been given. Had man preferred to eat of its fruit, he would have held on in life; but preferring to eat of the other, he fell down into death.

The tree of life, however, did not lose its virtue because the other tree had put forth its poison, but had in it the antidote of that poison; and God, by violently dispossessing man of the garden, and constantly preventing his approach to that tree, did signify, that for man, now mortal, there still existed an antidote to his death; and that in mortal man there ever lived a craving for that healing food of immortality. But the holy cherubim, interposing, did say, Approach not, till ye have obtained righteousness. This is the simple truth declared by these symbols, Dead though ye be, there is an antidote of life in existence for you, but a righteousness must be found before ye can approach it. Look also to the new earth, in the last two chapters of this book, and in it we find a city, the New Jerusalem, which descendeth out of heaven, in the midst of which is this tree of life. This New Jerusalem is for the habitation of the saints; and in most of these seven epistles the Spirit promiseth a place and preferment therein to him that overcometh. Now, observe what is said of those that are permitted to partake of this tree of life in the New Jerusalem, (Rev. xxii. 14,) "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." And compare this with the following verse, descriptive of those who enter not in thereto, (ver. 15,) "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Now, surely men will allow that locality and habitation, not life and death, are presented to us in such language as this. It is the locality and habitation of the righteous, as distinguished from the locality and habitation of the wicked; the one within, the other not within, the city. And to put it beyond a doubt that this is in the time of the peopled earth, when nations dwell upon it who need healing, let me quote again what is said of the tree of life, (Rev. xxii. 2,) "In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." And the same thing is shadowed forth in Ezek. xlvii. 12: "And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." Do I mean, then, to assert, that as in Eden there was a tree of life of which men might eat, so in the New Jerusalem, where the saints in their risen bodies dwell, (and somewhere embodied spirits must dwell,) there will be

such a tree, whose fruit shall feed immortal life, and whose leaves, borne outward upon the river which maketh glad the city of our God, shall be for medicine to the nations of the earth? I answer, That I believe the things in Eden to have been literally and exactly as they are written; and the things in the Revelations to be symbols of things which shall transcend in degree, but correspond in kind, with what is there written. And I believe, moreover, that the verdurous garden of Eden is the type of that habitation which is symbolically described in the New Jerusalem. But the type is never equal to the thing typified, though, in respect of use and kind and relation, it doth always occupy the same place. Now, as the object of paradise is essentially to be a place to the newly created man and his wife, so I believe the New Jerusalem to be a place for the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and His bride the Church, taken out of His bleeding side. *Place*, and not *life*—place for the complete persons, spirit and body, and not the life either of the one or of the other—is the thing signified by paradise; and the same believe I to be the thing signified by the New Jerusalem. It is not the resurrection of the body, it is not the resurrection of the saints, "the first resurrection," which is described in Rev. xx. 4; nor is it the final and general resurrection, which is described in the 13th verse of the same chapter; but it is the habitation for the risen saints during the thousand years of the earth's blessedness. It is place and locality which is the essence of the symbol, the New Jerusalem; it is not state of being, except as that is affected by place: and if so, then, as the trees of Paradise were for food, and the tree of life above all for feeding life in its fountain-head, and the others as it were for feeding it in the several organs which it works with and wears out: so do I believe that this tree of life, which is the only tree named in the New Jerusalem, is to signify that there would be a feeding and nourishing of life there from the outward world, besides the gift of life itself. If any one should feel, at this point of our interpretation, disposed to reject the idea of an outward nourishment for the immortal life of the risen body in the New Jerusalem, we ask him to suspend his judgment until we come to the second head of this subject, which will treat expressly of what is contained under the promise of eating; meanwhile, one or two more remarks are necessary to explain the full import of the expression, "the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Man's food was, originally, in the state of his innocency, of the trees of the garden: "Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat." Among these, no doubt, the tree of life was included. What distinction might entitle it to that name we know not, unless

it were that the other trees upbore the tear and wear of the body caused by existence and enjoyment, whereas this one nourished life in its fountain,—had a direct and immediate action upon the life itself. From the care that God took to prevent man from coming to it after his fall, "lest he should eat of it and live for ever," it seems to be implied, if not absolutely declared, that it had a virtue in it proper to confer immortality, as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had to bring death. And perhaps the reason, why in the New Jerusalem there is only this one tree of life, and none of the others, is, that, immortal life being then possessed by men, this tree, and this alone, is proper to their food. If man had eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived for ever, even after he had become subject to death from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: in order that the curse of death might take effect, it was necessary to prevent access to that other tree. This shows that man had not eaten of the tree of life before he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, although it lay within his reach. He might have joined himself to life, but he chose rather to join himself to death. The life, then, which he possessed anterior to the eating of the forbidden tree, was not an immortal life, but a life sustained, strengthened, and cherished by the various trees with which the garden was stored: not a life which could have died, nor yet a life which could be pronounced immortal; but a life whose exhaustion was ever supplied with pleasant, fragrant, and exhilarating fruits. But the life of the body in the world to come is not of this sort: it is an immortal life; and therefore hath no proper concert with any tree, save the tree of life, which is proper to the immortal and eternal life. This, therefore, seems to me to be implied in the promise of eating of the tree of life, That we shall have, not a nourishment such as Adam had, but a nourishment such as Adam might have had, but from which he was prevented by his sin. And not only was Adam prevented from approaching the tree of life, but he was punished, by being degraded to that food which was originally intended for the cattle of the field: "And thou shalt eat the herb of the field," (Gen. iii. 18.) Now, God had given "every green herb for meat to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth," (Gen. i. 30;) but to man he had given "every herb bearing seed, and every tree," (ver. 29.) If I err not, there was a degradation and a curse in this change of man's nourishment. As yet he had tasted no flesh; but after the Deluge, when his nature was doomed to undergo a still further degradation, and the length of his days to be curtailed, he received the nourishment of flesh; yet not, as it were, in fee simple,

but under a reservation of "the blood, which is the life;" signifying, as I take it, that God might and would reclaim that grant unto Himself. When the carnal ordinances were supplanted by the spiritual substance, and Christ became the parent of the spiritual life by regeneration of the Holy Ghost, that spiritual life was not self-supported any more than it was self-originated; but a support was provided for it in the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." The great truth contained under these expressions is, that we are nourished upon the offered body of Christ, and do derive from it the sustenance of our spiritual life, and shall derive from it the glorious resurrection. It bespeaks our life restored and supported by His death. It is a part of that "perfection through suffering;" suffering which began at the Fall, and was completely laid upon the creation at the Deluge; and doth signify, that through His death all the evil will be put away, and the curse wrought out. But when the resurrection of flesh, through the death-conquering power of His flesh, shall come to pass, we hear no more of eating flesh, or living upon flesh. All the forms of that suffering state are done away with, and again we have the Paradisaical form introduced, of eating the tree of life. All which lines of thought converge to this point, that Adam's being in paradise is the properest type of the being of the saints in the New Jerusalem; but, like all types, greatly inferior to the antitype, occupying indeed the same place, but in an inferior scale of the Creator's work.—It remains further, that we examine a little more clearly what is meant by the expression, "In the midst of the paradise of God."

The only question that can occur on this head, is, whether the place designated by these words be the place of the soul between death and the resurrection, or the place of both body and soul after the resurrection. As I have said already, my conviction is that it means the New Jerusalem, in which the tree of life is actually exhibited. And if any one ask, And why is the New Jerusalem not named? I answer, To teach us that Paradise with its tree of life, is the type of the New Jerusalem with its tree of life: it is the antitype expressed in terms of the type; which is the constant custom of the Scriptures: "Christ our Passover;" "the Church, the candlestick," &c. But if any one argue that it is the state of the separate spirit, I first turn his attention to the other six promises of these epistles, and show him that they have reference to and realisation in the New Jerusalem, as described in the last two chapters of this

book: then I show him the tree of life, there, and there only, mentioned: next I show him, that not until the seventh trumpet is blown, and the time for judging the dead is come, is the time for giving reward to them that overcome, (Rev.. xi. 18;) and finally I argue, that the expression "eating of a tree," implies a complete man, and not a disembodied spirit. If in answer to this last reason he allege, that in the communion we do by faith eat of the flesh and blood of Christ; I answer, That sense is necessary to an act of faith; not in the way of performing or helping to perform it, but in the way of rendering it necessary: the sense to darken, faith to trust where all to sense is dark. An act of faith is the act of one dark as to sense; and the darkness is both the merit and the marvel of faith. If Christ were not in the dark as to His human nature, as we are in the dark, He lived not by faith, as we are called to live by faith. An act of faith, therefore, is an act done in the fallen body, which darkeneth and betrayeth the soul that is not by the Holy Spirit, in answer to its faith, supported. And, therefore, to the partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ in the communion and always by faith, the sense is necessary; not, as the Papists say, to do the act, but to make faith necessary to do the act: and therefore it is in our complete being, body and soul, that we feed on Christ by faith in the Lord's Supper. And that nourishment doth reach its influence to every member of the body, as well as of the soul, to restrain them from sin; yea, and it doth carry forward our faith and hope to the time when we shall be changed into the substance of Christ's body, and be made fellow-heirs of His inheritance. So that the Lord's Supper, in every way you look at it, is an act of the complete man, and not of the spirit merely.

But the true way of bringing this question, Whether Paradise mean the middle state, to an issue, is by examining to what place the word Paradise in Scripture useth to refer. In the Old Testament, the Garden of Eden is always translated in the Greek by the word of which our word Paradise is the English form, and which is believed to be of Persian origin: and in various other parts of Scripture a pleasant garden is by the same word rendered: and from this the use of the word Paradise in our language is derived. Now let any one compare the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse with the Paradise of the Book of Genesis, and deny, if he can, that the one is described in terms of the other, so far as can be consistently with the preservation of the distinct properties of a garden and a city. The second Adam and His bride its sole possessors; the tree of life in the midst; the river; the exclusion from it of everything that defileth and maketh a lie; the immediate presence of God,

and many other things, which can be predicated of no other place than the New Jerusalem, do put it beyond a doubt that this and Paradise are intended by God to stand in the relation of type and antitype. And I have no doubt whatever, as hath been already said, that the name Paradise is used in the text for the very end of marking this relation by a divine sanction. The use of the word Paradise as synonymous with the third heaven, in 2 Cor. xi. 4, demonstrates the same truth. Without going into the question, where the place of separate spirits is, we can certainly assert, upon Christ's authority, that He had not ascended unto His Father till after the resurrection; for when He appeared to Mary Magdalene He spake to her in these words, (John xx. 17,) "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Now there was no higher or holier place among the Jews than the third heaven, which they believed, as indeed of heaven generally, that it is the special abode of Deity; and Christ's ascension is never otherwise described than "into heaven." We may conclude, therefore, that wherever Christ as a separate spirit was between His death and the resurrection, it was not in the third heaven, or in the heaven at all, otherwise it would have been with God. No doubt He went where other separate spirits go; otherwise His death would not have been like our death, which consisteth not in a buried body merely, but in a soul inhabiting somewhere. This place the ancient Church thought to be in the lower parts of the earth; taking that opinion from what is written, Eph. iv. 9, 10, which is a passage bearing so much upon the matter in hand that we cannot forbear quoting it: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." If any one say that the separate soul is taken at once into heaven, all I can do is to ask proof, and to observe that Christ's soul was not so privileged; and therefore He hath not in all things the pre-eminence, but in this His people have it. Of the New Jerusalem it is never otherwise spoken than as above and in the heavens, and coming out of heaven from God: and it is called the city of God, where God hath His habitation, and will ever have it, (Gal. iv.; Rev. ii., iii., xxi.) And seeing Paul identifies Paradise with the third heaven, the dwelling-place of God, and John identifies the New Jerusalem with the dwelling-place of God, what can any one say, but that the New Jerusalem and Paradise are one and the same?

There is one text indeed, and only one, in the whole Scripture, which hath even the appearance of contradicting these conclusions, and that is the text which represents our Lord as saying to the thief upon the cross, "I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." In which text, let only the comma be placed after "to-day," and it is in harmony with the whole Scriptures; "I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with me in paradise:" and methinks that this is the best reason in the world for altering the punctuation, which is a thing not of inspiration, but of human invention. But I hold that besides putting the passage in harmony with every Scripture where mention is made of Paradise, it is more consistent with the grammatical structure of the words, and with the sense of the context, which two things ought ever to give the law to the punctuation of unpunctuated manuscripts, as the originals of the Scriptures are. Prefacing then these remarks with the declaration that I am a steady believer in the blessedness of the soul in its separate state—concerning which I shall have to discourse plentifully in the progress of these lectures—I observe that the passage in which the promise to the thief occurs has nothing to do whatever with the separate state. His request was, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." That a Jew understood by the kingdom of Messiah the separate state, no one will even dare to affirm; and this alone ought to lead us into the suspicion of any interpretation which discovers the separate state and not the kingdom in our Lord's answer, concerning which state of souls I do not find that He ever discourseth at all; and how He should fall upon the discourse of it when the penitent thief's question led Him to another subject altogether, is what I cannot understand. Besides that, as we have said above, Paradise never by any chance means the separate state, but always the New Jerusalem, which is at present above with God, and, when it shall come down to the earth, will be the proper antitype of the Paradise of Eden. These are insuperable difficulties against the common interpretation of the passage, which has nothing in grammar to recommend it, but quite the reverse. The passage being rendered word for word is as follows: "Verily I say to thee, To-day with me shalt thou be in paradise." Now even an English eye, looking at the sentence, would hesitate with which clause to connect the adverb *to-day*, and would be guided by the context and the meaning of the words; and if he should be told that Christ was not in Paradise on that day, nor until forty days after His resurrection, he would not hesitate for a moment in saying, Then surely the *to-day* must, and cannot otherwise but, be connected with the former clause, "I say unto thee." And if even an English eye would thus reason

and judge, much more would any one acquainted with the idiom of the Greek language, which hardly ever places the adverb before the verb and its adjuncts, but most commonly after; so that it is in the analogy of grammar to connect it rather with the first than with the second clause. In proof of this idiom, let me refer to these two passages, (Matt. v. 11,) which is, being translated out of the original, "Our daily bread give to us to-day:" (Luke xi. 11.) "That there is born to you to-day a Saviour;" and from the Septuagint many passages of the like kind might be quoted. Better in grammar, therefore, I hold it, and absolutely necessary to preserve consistency with all the other Scriptures where the word Paradise is mentioned, is it to change the punctuation, and write it thus: "Verily I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with me in paradise." But how does this bear, when considered in connexion with the penitent's request? It bears a most excellent and appropriate meaning. The thief asks to be remembered at a certain time, when Christ should be clothed with power and glory. Christ answers, "Now, even to-day, I remember thee." The thief thought that Christ's power was limited by the grievous conditions with which he was surrounded, and knew not of the twelve legions of angels which would have unsheathed their swords at His bidding; and Jesus, to teach him that He was dying a King, as well as about to come again, says to him, "Amen I say to thee to-day, Thou shalt be with me in paradise:" not only shalt thou be remembered there, but *with me* shalt thou be then, where I am, and as I am. And thus, as in all other petitions that were made to Christ, the answer far outwent the thing requested. The petition went into His ear a man's thought, but it came forth of His lips again enlarged beyond a mortal's narrow charity. On all which accounts, I find no difficulty in this passage, which is altogether confirmatory of our four general conclusions, That paradise is the name for the place in which Christ and the believer shall abide when He cometh in His kingdom. Let this, then, suffice for the resolution of the first question, What is to be understood by the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God? It is that which is mentioned in the first three chapters of Genesis in the type, and that which is mentioned in the last two chapters of the Revelations in the realised antitype. And now we come to the second question, What is meant by the promise, to him that overcometh, He shall *eat* of that tree?

When we would interpret this promise, like all the others, to signify something which to our glorified bodies shall stand in the same relation that eating doth to our present body of weakness and vileness, there ariseth I know not what feeling of disgust in the mind, as if it

were a thing never for a moment to be entertained, but rejected on the instant with disdain. But a few words will convince us that this is worthy of a more calm and deliberate entertainment. If, indeed, there be associated with eating nothing but the idea of preserving ourselves from death by famine; if it be regarded as a badge of the mortal body; if it be looked upon as necessarily followed by dishonourable and disgusting circumstances, then I wonder not that it should be rejected from our notion of that blessed state into which death enters not, nor flesh and blood, nor anything which defileth. But if those circumstances which do now accompany it be not necessarily, but accidentally, its accompaniments: if it be not the badge of a mortal and corruptible creature, but is ever found to be as essential a function of man as is seeing or hearing, and exhibited in Scripture as performed by him both before the fall and after the resurrection, without inducing any after consequences of pollution or disgust;—if, moreover, it be that only act whereby man possesseth the creation, and the vegetable creation bringeth its offerings of grateful help to man;—and, finally, if it be a commandment and privilege of God to man in his state of innocence and purity; and if, in its after-consequences in and upon the body, it be attended with all that is tasteful, fragrant, and happy to ourselves and others—all which we shall easily show—then I think it will be the duty of my readers to bow to the good arbitrament of God, and to receive as a blessing and a reward that which as a blessing and a reward He hath promised unto us.

I began this apology for God's word, and for God's ordinance of a tree of life in the New Jerusalem, with the condition of man above the fall; to whom it was said by God, immediately upon His creation, (Gen. i. 29,) "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat;" and again, (Gen. ii. 16,) "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." Now, lest any one should say (for there is no limit to their ingenuity in wresting the Scriptures from their plain and obvious sense) that this is a constitution not given for man above the fall, but for man considered respectively as about to fall, I have these two things to set forth. First, That the latter of these two injunctions is set in contrast with the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is excepted from the rest. No one will say that this exception was made with a view to the state below the fall, seeing that it was intended to prevent the fall: and if this was clearly for the supralapsarian state of man, then so also for that was the exception, without which it hath no meaning whatever. Take the whole passage to-

gether, and say whether it be possible for any honest man to deny that man in his state of innocence was commanded by God to feed upon the fruit of all the trees of the garden, except that one only. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) Secondly, As I have remarked above, I believe that the substance of man's good underwent deterioration after the fall; for this is part of the curse, "And thou shalt eat the herb of the field:" whereas, above the fall, there is a distinction taken between the herbs which were to be food for man and those which were to be food for cattle: which distinction is ommitted afterwards. The whole vegetable world is divided into three classes: "The earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself, after his kind," (Gen. i. 12.) Of these, the two latter were yielded for food to man, but in the curse man is doomed to eat the herbs of the field without distinction. This is made more manifest if we look to the annals of Paradise, as they are more particularly recorded in the second chapter of Genesis; for then man hath the trees of Paradise for his food from which afterwards he was entirely excluded. But enough has been said to convince any but wreckless gainsayers, of whom there are too many, that man before the Fall, in his state of innocency, beauty, and blessedness, was appointed to eat, and did eat, and for this end had a beautiful and fragrant table spread for him, the fruit of all the trees of Eden. Doth not this prove that the end of eating is not to prevent death—for death then was there none—but to give the body its proper enjoyment, even as knowledge and love are the proper enjoyments of the mind? Doth it not prove, moreover, that the painful and disgusting after-consequences of eating and drinking are not necessary to that act of the body? for surely there were no such consequences to that holy man who was meet company for the Lord God. In truth, all these are the consequences of corruption, which is the consequence of mortality. Instead of which if immortality were present, then do I believe that all the after-effects of eating would be changed in their character, from being painful and unpleasant, to be pleasant and delightful, and to bear testimony to the purity and the purifying virtue of that body which man then possesseth.—But, reserving what I have to say upon this subject until I have finished with the probation of the points I have undertaken, I proceed to the next instance on record of immortal and glorious persons eating upon this earth.

It is that recorded of the three men who visited Abraham on the plains of Mamre—of whom we know certainly that the one was Jehovah the Word of God, who of the three Persons in the Godhead is the only One who hath ever been seen or who can be seen: and who the other two were we know not; haply two glorified spirits of mankind, who bare Him company, as afterwards Moses and Elias did on the Mount of Transfiguration. Now these three persons, men whose feet needed to be washed and their weariness to be rested, did eat and drink of the meal which Abraham provided for them; "And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it: and he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat," (Gen. xviii. 7, 8.) Now, whatever view any one may take of these celestial visitants, there can be no doubt that they were of the immortals; the one being the eternal Son of God, clothed in flesh, and the others being either angels, who for the occasion took flesh, or spirits of men, which I rather believe: and, being so, they ate and drank, and thereby taught us that unto the being of a true man eating and drinking are as essential attributes as seeing or hearing, or any other of our bodily affections. Now these men did not take it for appearance merely, but for refreshment: they were on their way to Sodom: and when they came to Sodom, they were received by Lot, and hospitably entertained, (Gen. xix. 2:) "And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night." Are not these repeated declarations of God's word sufficient to convince any one but an unbeliever, that of man's body, in whatever state of the mortal or the immortal, it is an essential property to be sustained by food as to be impressed with light or sound? and ought not this to satisfy us, that to this act of eating there is nothing disgustful in any way essentially apppertaining?—The next passage of holy Scripture to which I refer, as casting light upon this subject, is written in Exod. xxiv. 9–11: "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." This company of the nobles of Israel, being introduced to the vision of the glorified Son of God, were not molested of him in any way, but hospitably entertained with meat

and drink, which he had provided for them in the solitude of Mount Sinai. This, I think, should reconcile us to the worthiness of these acts to a state of glory, when they were made part of a vision given thus of the glory of the God of Israel.

But all these, and some other instances of the like kind which might be gleaned from the Old Testament, though they might serve to reconcile us to entertain, would not establish the doctrine, that in our spiritual bodies, above the resurrection, there shall be eating and drinking, as there was in the state of innocency; and I do intend them merely as preparatory to two express declarations of our Lord, as distinct as language can make them. The first is, that declaration constantly recorded by all the Evangelists spoken on the occasion of the Supper, thus given over by St Luke xxii. 16, "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Now I simply ask, without offering any explanation, if this does not bear upon the face of it, that He was again to eat of the passover against a future time, when it should be accomplished in His kingdom? If this is not implied in these words, "I will not any more eat thereof, until—" then have I no faculty of understanding words. But still more distinct are the two following verses, (verses 17, 18:) "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." Now to what time doth Christ refer? to what time doth He postpone this eating of the passover and drinking of the fruit of the vine? For that He will do this against some time, I believe Him upon His word, as surely as I believe every other word He spake. There be many interpretations as to the time signified by "the kingdom of God's coming." That it is a time future, I think the Lord's prayer, in which we pray for it continually, is evidence enough. No doubt present to faith, and in the believer already come within him "without observation," in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; in patience and in suffering; and so are we also in faith risen with Christ, and seated with Him in the heavenly places, entered within the veil, into the presence of the Father: but though these things be to faith present, no one asserteth that these things are really come, in the full sense in which they shall be hereafter; or that they are come in any other sense than as objects of faith, whose property it is to substantiate things not seen and to make present things future. But take their own interpretation of a subject which has some difficulties around it, and cannot here be regularly handled—namely, that it came at Pentecost, or at the destruction of Jerusalem—and it equally serveth the

purpose of proving, that this action of eating and drinking Christ hath not yet performed with His disciples; for no one believeth that they are yet raised from the dead, but wait for the glorious resurrection of the saints, when they shall be raised in the likeness of His glory, (Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 1, 2.) We conclude, therefore, that against that glorious time, and in that glorious kingdom, it will be as the Lord declareth; and that eating and drinking, in some kind or other which answereth to these acts now, will be present there. If any man be offended with my Lord's words, I would rather he should vent the odium of his offence upon me than upon Him; but there they are, and He spake them.

The second declaration to the same purpose is still fuller, and occurreth in the same chapter of Luke, (xxii. 28–30:) "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Now I am willing to admit that in this passage there is something of the figurative; that by sitting at His own table He intended to set forth the special place of honour and preferment which awaited His apostles, even as among earthly princes, this is the sign of rank and dignity in the kingdom: but while I allow this, I will not suffer the express words to be explained away into nothing at all. Whether it shall be a table such as is spread by earthly monarchs, and whether it be covered with such dainties, I stand not to inquire—and if men scoff on this account, I bear their scoff patiently for my faith's sake;—but that there will be nourishment of some kind presented by the Lord to His faithful apostles, and that they will receive joy and gladness from that which is provided for them, as well as from Him by whose goodness it is provided, I verily believe, because "the Lord hath said it." Neither do I stand to inquire whether there shall be thrones to sit upon, as now monarchs have; but that there will be the dominion and power of which the throne is the symbol, I fully believe. And so believing of this, I believe the same of the other; that meat and drink, such as are proper to that spiritual body, shall be prepared for it out of the fruit-bearing earth, which shall be pure as our bodies are pure: not indeed at the beginning of the millennium all over the earth, but there where the New Jerusalem is, where alone the tree of life is planted. In confirmation of this truth, I could bring many corroborations: as, for example, the request of the mother of Zebedee's children, who desired for her sons the chief seats at His table: this Jesus did not reject as a foolish, sensual, base notion, but simply replied, that "it was not

His to give but for whom it is prepared of His Father," (Matt. xx.) When one of them that sat at meat with him said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," (Luke xiv. 15,) He did not rebuke the thought as perverse, and crude and brutish; but straightway constructed the parable of the Marriage Supper, confirmatory of the idea, built upon the idea, and intended to show forth the character of those who should have that blessedness. And this language is continually kept up to the very end of the Apocalypse, where the millennial blessedness, and the state of Christ and His bride in the New Jerusalem, are declared to be the very thing which is signified in the gospels by the marriage supper, (Rev. xix. 9,) "And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

In further confirmation of all these conclusions look at the Lord in His resurrection state ere yet He had ascended into glory, eating in the presence of His disciples a broiled fish and a honeycomb, for the very purpose of convincing them that He was not a spirit, (Luke xxiv. 38–44.) What can be more convincing than this? Christ having showed His hands and His feet, that they were pierced through, and having desired them to handle His flesh and bones, for the putting away of all possible doubt of His having a real human body with inward life as well as outward appearance and form, take and eat meat in their presence: which meat, no doubt, thereafter His body did turn into nourishment, without anything offensive following, which offences cometh only of present corruption; and this we leave in the grave behind us. Upon these grounds I desire to leave my testimony on record, that I believe the body, after the resurrection, will have its appropriate food, which in our text is represented by the tree of life.

I know what a stone I am rolling up the hill; I know what a body-despising Puritan (falsely called spiritual) generation I am speaking to; men who, not understanding the question of materialism at all, nor seeing the glory of God in it, have an ignorant prejudice against the whole subject, and a pitiful fear of it, as holding of the materialist school. Poor wits! what are you afraid of? Has not God made me with a body? and is He not to raise me again with a body? and is there not to be a new earth as well as a new heaven? What make you so much outcry about, ye disciples of the shadowy elysium of the heathens? I would you had more reverence for God's material creation, and for man's body, creation's lord. I wish you would become a little more learned, and read what the ancient Church believed, and what she wrote upon this subject; for example, Tertullian's treatise, *de Carne Hominis.* But

"ye are the men, and wisdom will die with you!" I wonder truly what hand of God binds me to this unwearied controversy with such unbelieving spiritualists. Were it not that I love His truth, and that I love His Church, I would be silent altogether, or speak my speech in impatient satire, and not in patient discourse. But I must be patient, and patient I will be; I began this topic with prayer, and I trust I shall have to conclude it with praise.

If men would reflect that there is no evil in the act of eating, any more than in the act of seeing and hearing and speaking; and that all the painful consequences of one sense, as of another sense, are derived from the evil in us, which being purged away in the resurrection of the body will exist no longer to make the actings of God's creature painful and disgusting;—and if, moreover, they would remember that the only way in which the earth, the fruit-bearing earth, can minister to man, is through his function of eating and drinking; and that in the New Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven there is a tree of life, whereof the citizens eat, (which, if it be symbolical, must yet be symbolical only of nourishment derived from without;)—and if to all these considerations they will add that under the present dispensation the highest mystery of the Christian faith is set forth in the acts of eating and drinking; and that not once, like baptism, but ever and anon, like the receiving of nourishment:—I say, if all these things were taken into consideration, it seems to me that men, even of the slenderest faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, might be brought to believe that the thing will be fulfilled which Christ promised to the twelve; that "they should eat and drink with Him at His table, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

There is one passage which is generally quoted against all such doctrines concerning the body as we have been maintaining above; the passage is in the twentieth chapter of Luke, where our Lord declares that, "at the resurrection we shall be equal unto the angels" and "not marry, nor be given in marriage:" from which I think some would go the length of concluding that we shall be transformed into the angelic mode of being; for they have come to hold very slight and slippery views concerning the body, and the resurrection of the body, and the visible world altogether. The history was as follows:—Certain intellectual Sadducees, who, like many that are called Christians, would know the *how* and the *why* of everything, and would believe only what they could conceive the manner of—that is, believe nothing at all—came to our Lord with a grand puzzle, which no doubt was a standing argument against the resurrection of the body. The puzzle was, that a woman had had seven husbands, one after another; and who should have her for

wife in the resurrection? Christ answered, "The children of this world (age) marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, (age,) and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, (angel-wise,) and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." But doth He say, they eat not any and drink not any? No: He saith merely, that they shall be not male and female there, there shall not be generation of children, nor marrying nor giving in marriage; but that they should be as angels in these respects. For there is one great difference between the mode of man's being and the mode of angel's being; that we are brought into being through the holy ordinance of marriage, whereas they arose each in their several personalities and independent being at the voice of God's creative word. Therefore it is He chooses the instance of the angels, in order to explain that from death those whom the Father should count worthy of it would arise each in his separate dignity as a king and priest, to be used by God in His holy government; but not to intermarry with one another, or produce in that way any others. But this is a glorious passage of Scripture which we have quoted: it teacheth us that there will be a resurrection from amongst the dead, of those that are counted worthy, at the beginning of the age to come; and that those who rise to inherit that age shall never die. Now, this is the life everlasting spoken of in the Scriptures, of which the immortal food is the tree of life promised in the text to him who overcometh. These are they who, at the coming of the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, shall arise from their graves to meet Him in the clouds; when they who are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord shall be changed. These are they who live and reign with Christ upon the earth a thousand years, before the general resurrection unto judgment. Not that this judgment maketh any let or hindrance, or any way interrupteth the continuity, of their blessed being; but rather otherwise: for it is well to be believed, that if this earth hath been fruitful and glorious during the thousand years, when death still abideth upon the people born and living in the flesh, that it shall be much more blessed and glorious when death shall have been cast into the hell of the second death; when the dust of the wicked shall have been gathered from the substance of the earth; when an end shall have been made of all evil, and possibility of evil, upon the face of the world, and Christ and His saints shall possess, in immortal bodies, an immortal inheritance. Of what kind then shall be the beauty of the earth; of what brilliancy the aspect of the heavens, or what temper the

elements of the world; of what nourishment shall be the fruits of the ground, and of what blessed influence the sun, and moon, and stars; it passeth comprehension to know; and if we knew, it would surpass words to utter. But will man cease to be all-enjoying man, or will the earth cease to be the all-producing earth? No, never. They may mock their fill, and laugh and deride and scoff their wicked pleasure, because we say that man will eat and drink, and take unto himself the earth's well-pleased ministry; but why should they thus deride the word of God, to their own shame and condemnation? Let them "stand in awe, and sin not;" let them meditate the wonderful things which God hath said, and not be offended at His word. Oh, if man's wicked and corruptible flesh do now, by eating and drinking, change the sweet odours, and decompose the juicy fragrant fruits which God doth provide for us—proving thereby that all the forms of sin and evil, as they proceeded from man at first, and filled the world, do still from him propagate themselves abroad—why should it not be, yea, surely it must be, that when his body hath attained unto incorruption and immortality, it shall by its use of all things bless, beautify, and change into a thousand more excellent forms, all things which it useth; that, receiving from the earth its beautiful, fragrant, juicy nourishments, and possessing them by eating and by drinking, the body will purify, sweeten, and in a thousand unknown ways refine what it partaketh, which, flowing forth at every pore, shall ensphere us with incense and with odours and with sweet fragrancy exhaling around, more exquisite than the flower gardens of the summer, and the spices which blow from Araby the Blest? Oh, what would these low-minded and scurrilous disbelievers of God's word say, if I should affirm that man were to arise from the grave maimed in his limbs, or without limbs at all, blinded in his eyes, or without eyes at all, his ears stopped, his voice untuned, his sense paralysed? They would deservedly treat me as a reviler of God's high purpose, and a blasphemer of His holy word. But is man an outer skin merely, and hath he no inner organisation? Are those vital organs which most do minister unto the life of man, to be awanting in the resurrection? And if not awanting, for what use present, if it be not for some use which to eating and drinking beareth the same analogy as the use of the eyes shall then bear to seeing, the use of the ears to hearing, and of the voice to singing? And if the use of the eye in the world to come is named by the word "seeing," and if the use of the ear is named by the word "hearing," by what word shall we name the use of the mouth, and those inward parts of man, but by the words "eating and drinking," by which our Lord himself doth name them?

Vile scoffers! I cannot away with their unbelief! And why will they not believe? Because they understand not, that is, because "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But are they not "revealed to us by the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Will they not take the word of God for these things? And I am sure I have the testimony of my reader that I have spoken no otherwise than according to the word of God. Everything which I have said, I have authenticated from the word of God: not from single passages, but from many passages; yea, I may say, from the whole tenor of it. And truly, I see not how any one in his right mind can refuse these interpretations of the word of God, which are simple, straightforward, unperplexed, and harmonious with each other. Do we deny any point of orthodox doctrine or of sound morality, that they should speak against us in such unmeasured terms? Are we wicked persons, are we blasphemers, because we interpret the word of God simply and honestly, and believe that which it declareth? Or are we now to believe nothing which to man seemeth impossible? Then, to take an instance, how should any rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven; for that not only seemeth to man to be impossible, but by Christ is declared to be absolutely "impossible with man?" But, say these men, We must not believe anything which looketh to us impossible. Then, O thou weakling! O thou wicked one! thou dost exclude all rich men from the kingdom of heaven. But we, who believe that all things are possible with God, and that all things that are written shall surely come to pass, do take you, ye rich men, out of the hands of these disbelievers of hard and impossible things, and we do say unto you, "Be of good cheer! your salvation, though as impossible with men as to make a camel pass through a needle's eye, is possible with God, and shall surely come to pass, if ye will be willing to make unto yourselves bags that wax not old; to lay up for yourselves treasures in the heavens; to make for yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, which shall be able to receive you into everlasting habitations."

And let this suffice for the second question, which concludes the first part of our inquiry into the Spirit's word to the Church in Ephesus. And now for the second inquiry, which is one of a much shorter and simpler kind, namely, the description of the persons to whom the promise is made, "To him that overcometh."

This promise, though it be directed to the churches and uttered in the hearing of all mankind, is the inheritance only of him that overcometh; and it is common to all the epistles, and therefore to

be regarded as a point of great importance, and worthy of the most careful consideration. It presents us the aspect of the Church, of all saints, of all churches, as engaged in a controversy and conflict from which there is no escape by change of place or change of condition; one continued restless warfare, wherein we must either overcome or be overcome by those we are matched against. Most wisely, therefore, do we denominate the Church in its present condition the Church militant, the Church after the resurrection the Church triumphant. These common words with which each charge beginneth, "I know thy works," do mark the period as a season of ceaseless labour: those common words with which each promise commenceth, "To him that overcometh," do mark it as a season of unremitting strife and warfare. And with what powers is the controversy and conflict carried on? With the powers of darkness, whose array and number is diversely set forth in Holy Writ. Our Lord enumerates them to be these: our own life, the gain of the world, and the shame of man's censure. (Luke ix. 24–26:) "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life, for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." This enumeration presents us, first, with our own self-love to be overcome; secondly, the world's kingdoms; and, thirdly, the good opinion of other men: which are truly the three most formidable foes to the Christian's progress in the footsteps of the Lord, and make every step to be like the sad and slow step of a condemned criminal, bearing his cross to the place of execution. Wherefore also the Lord ushereth in the enumeration with these solemn words of warning, (Luke ix. 23,) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." He himself, in His strife with Satan, had two of these enemies presented to Him,—His own life, which craved nourishment; the world's kingdoms, which lay in their glory at His feet: and for the third, He had a deeper and more perilous enemy,—spiritual delusion, the misinterpretation, misapplication, and abuse of the holy Scriptures; which is the parent of heresy, schism, apostasy, and all the other more deadly sins whose province is the Church, where they lie in wait to destroy unstable souls. This third field of Christian conflict is occupied by the false and evil spirits, which, taking possession of vain and covetous teachers, become lying spirits in their mouth, whereby whole multitudes are led astray to their own soul's damnation, and to the

injury of the truth, (2 Pet. ii. 1, 2,) These evil spirits, also, without the help of false teachers, work by their wiles directly upon the souls of Christians, and suggest continual forms of error, which lie around us like traps and gins on every side, to the inevitable ruin of all who are not ever looking to the great Shepherd, who leads and guides His sheep in the right way, and delivers them from their enemies of whatever kind; for He is "the good Shepherd, who giveth His life for the sheep." These our enemies, dearly beloved brethren, we are called by our Lord, in the strength of His ever-present, ever-helpful Spirit, to make constant head against, and evermore to overcome: and to him that overcometh the good Shepherd will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Now the Apostle Paul, in enumerating the Christian's enemies, giveth a somewhat different reckoning of them, as follows, (Eph. vi. 12,) "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." In this enumeration he meaneth not to exclude flesh and blood from the Anti-christian array; concerning whose miserable oppression he well discourseth in Rom. vii., Gal. v., and elsewhere; but, being filled with the thought of the devil's wiles, he hastily runneth over the enmity of flesh and blood, in order to dwell upon Satan's confederacy against the saints; which consisteth of, (1.) The princedoms and powers, the lordships, the masteries, and every authority constituted on earth, which were then in combination against the Lord and His Anointed: so that, be Christians conditioned as they may—subjects, servants, wives, children, or in any other inferior condition,—they must be prepared to meet from their kings, masters, husbands, parents, and other superiors, a desperate opposition to the truth. (2.) "The rulers of the darkness of this world;" by which, if I err not, is meant, not so much spiritual wickednesses, as the potentates of the earth,—perhaps the Roman emperors and others, whom Satan used as the body and limbs of his raging wrath against the woman's Seed; "the dragon with seven heads and ten horns." I do not say but that, in a wider sense, all potentates, and perhaps the prince of darkness himself, may be meant by this expression considered apart; but in the present context I rather incline to look upon it as the Roman empire, which under various heads hath ruled the ascendant of darkness, and headed and guided the warfare against the Church. And (3.) "the spiritual wickednesses (the spirituals of the wickedness) in high places," (in the super-celestials,) by whom I understand the fallen spirits, with Satan at their head, who are the spiritual instigators of wickedness; who

combine the particles of many men's energies into a whole wicked form, and work them with united strength against the Church. Men are separate persons, though one substance; and before they can be united, for good or for ill, a spirit must intervene. The Holy Spirit bindeth the churches; spirits of darkness bind the world: "The dragon gave him his seat, and his power, and great authority." These spiritual wickednesses were, when the apostle wrote, still in the heavenly places, Satan having access to the congregation of the sons of God, as the accuser-general of the brethren; but both he and they are afterwards cast down from that liberty, and confined to the earth and the terrestrial regions, as is fully set forth in the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse. And this achievement was wrought, not so much by Michael and his angels, as by the blood of the martyrs of those churches, which are here seven times addressed with the spirit-stirring word of the Holy Ghost, "To him that overcometh I will give," &c. How glorious is the Christian's calling, to be God's champion against the evil powers of darkness, Satan and his angels! God crowneth Christ King over all: and He saith, Deny His right who dare, here are my champions; and His saints step out into the field of conflict. And Satan, who is never slack to strife, contention, and murder, takes up the gage of battle, *à l'outrance*, to the uttermost; and he brings forth the marshalled principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world. And the battle is fiercely joined, and ever and anon we hear the Spirit's voice running along our line, and thrilling to the heart of every soldier, "To him that overcometh I will give," &c. And as he findeth one portion in one way pressed, and another portion in another, He varies the promise according to their various need: until every soul is on fire, and every heart resolved to conquer or to die. Oh, what an honour is yielded to us, my fellow-soldiers, to be the champions for Christ our King!

While thus we derive from different parts of Scripture the number and nature of our enemies, we believe that this Book of the Apocalypse itself, as it contains in these three chapters our King's instructions to the chief captains, and the Spirit's instructions to every soldier; and again, in the last three chapters, the great rewards of the victorious army; so likewise in the intervening chapters doth it contain the array of enemies, against whom the Church is marshalled in holy warfare; especially in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters; towards the end of which the battle is proclaimed to be finished, and the victory won, (Rev. xiv. 12, 13,) "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." For immediately after this proclamation Christ cometh a victorious King riding on a cloud, and with the sickle in His hand as the

great Reaper, the great Head of the reaping angels, (Matt. xiii., xxiv.,) He gathers into His garner, into the cloud of His glory, all the faithful ones who have fought for Him and overcome; and with them He proceedeth to tread the winepress, and do the other acts of power and judgment upon the nations. To that word of the Spirit, therefore, quoted above, I attach a great value in the machinery and structure of the Apocalyptic mystery;—as proclaiming from on high the end of the long and laborious work-day; the termination of the gallant conflict of the Church against all the enemies of God and of His Christ. Now, the enemies enumerated in this book are:—the dragon, in open destructive fight against the Church; giving no quarter, and practising no deception: until, wearied out with the patience of the saints, and finding no end of such havoc as he wrought in those first ages of persecution, he betakes himself to wiles, empoisoning certain waters in his foul mouth, with which to deluge and destroy the Church. Not finding this method of the Arian heresy to prosper, any more than the other, he resigns the work into the hand of the confederate beasts of the 13th chapter, the Emperor and the Pope; and lastly, he comes from the bottomless pit, all-impregnated with blasphemy, to make a last and desperate effort by infidelity to subvert all foundations; in which awful struggle, at this time proceeding, he is himself subverted. These are the three general forms of wickedness against which the seven churches, or Church universal, is inspirited by the words of the Holy Ghost. I cannot now describe them particularly, or set them forth with discriminative marks, or show the diverse fountains of our nature from which they flow, or the powers in creation, which Satan embodieth and inspireth against the truth. But, whatever they be, they are brought together in the sixth vial, poured forth from the mouth, as a deluge of evil principles, which work opposition to the Lord our God, and gather the frantic nations to battle against the Lamb and those that are with Him. I believe these three spirits to be, (1.) arbitrary, tyrannical, blind Force, as a principle; (2.) damnable delusion and craft of Papal superstition, as a principle; (3.) blasphemous Infidelity as a principle, scornful of Christ's actual rights, trampling and treading upon them, and mocking and contemning, ay, and persecuting and condemning, all who will maintain them. These forms of enmity the Church hath in succession had to stand against; but we, whose lot it is to be in the evil and perilous times of the last days, have now to stand against them all, coming on in one rude shock. This gives us another beautiful, simple, and true idea of the structure of the Apocalypse, as it concerneth the Church: Her marshalling for the battle, chaps. i., ii.,

iii.; the history of her battles, chaps. xi., xii., xiii., xiv.; and the triumphant entering into possession of the conquered earth, and the rearing of the eternal monument and trophy of her victory, chaps. xx., xxi., xxii. For the other chapters, they contain the demonstration of Christ as the Head of kingdoms, and do not so immediately concern the Church. These views also confirm and illustrate the radical idea which we have given of these seven epistles, as comprehending the whole Church, in all times and places, until Christ shall come again with its collected and triumphant myriads.

One thing remaineth to complete this long discourse upon the first of these epistles, which hath embraced so wide a range, in order to fix and settle several questions preliminary to the whole series. The thing which remains is, to come back to the Church of Ephesus, and show the adaptation of this promise to their case, and the exact fulfilment of the threatening upon that Church.

What method would any parent, having a child whose love had waxed or was waxing cold, take to re-animate the languishing flame? Would it not be, to admonish that child of His continual and increasing watchfulness over its welfare? "For thee, my child, I labour all the day long, that thou mayest enjoy thy youth in quietness and peace: for thee I meditate in the watches of the night how I may best provide for thy well-being; and for thee I pray, and am full of care and anxiety always." This method Christ takes to re-animate the angel of the Ephesian Church: "I walk up and down continually amongst you; I intercede for you; I take upon me your cares; I provide for all your spiritual distresses; I never forget you; you are engraven upon the palms of my hands; your candlestick is ever before me." And if the subjects of a king, seeing him not, should grow indifferent to his person and inobservant of their duties of loyalty, what way so good to reanimate their drooping spirits, as to make known to them, that he was employed in continual deliberation for their welfare; sleeping not, resting not, but ever laborious for their prosperity, and weighed down with the cares of state; that, though they saw him not, he was walking among them unknown; knew every widow's widowhood, and provided for every orphan's helplessness; and was the soul of that prosperity which they enjoyed? Such is the method taken by Christ to re-animate the love of the angel of the Church in Ephesus. But withal, that he might be possessed of the whole truth, He warneth him, that, if he repented not and returned not to his former works, He certainly would come and despoil him of that in which his glory stood, his candlestick, upon

which he was elevated on high in the sight of men;—working upon him by all the love which He had for the prosperity of His flock, for His own dignity and honour, and for the work which He had well begun, to continue patiently to intend that care which He had so patiently and laboriously entered upon: moreover, teaching him that no care of the flock, that no reverence of the ordinances, that no love of the souls of the people, that no labour in behalf of the outward visible estate of the Church, could avail to any permanent good, unless it proceeded from, was accompanied by, and perfected in, the love of Jesus Himself; without whom all ordinances and services are vain, and the reverence of them but a wicked idolatry. "*Thy* candlestick," that which thou lovest and gloriest in, and labourest for—the object of thy heart, the staff of thy strength, the sight of thine eyes—shall be taken away, "removed from its place, unless thou repent." Well suited, therefore, whether you look to the aspect of Himself offered to their contemplation, or to the threatening of His providence held out, was the method which the Lord took.. And so, also, if you look to the promise: for what so welcome to a good shepherd as to know that, according as he fed others he should himself be fed; that what pastoral care he put forth, that pastoral care he should prove through eternity? And so, also, how consolatory to the people to know, that in despite of all neglect and contempt, they had a Shepherd who was walking amongst them, and who should in the fulness of time lead them by the still waters, and make them to lie down in the rich pastures; who should lead them by rivers of living waters, and wipe away all tears from their eyes? Never was an epistle framed at once with such skill to cover the ordinances with dignity, and to prevent them from being trampled on. Like all the works of God, it is perfect; and, like all the words of Christ, it is such as never man spake.

But there is something more than mere threatening in that word of the Lord Jesus Christ, "I will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." These epistles are not words to that minister and that church, but to all ministers and all churches. They are the oracles which define the eternal laws of ecclesiastical polity. This Church is the exhibition to all churches, of what is the necessary consequence of a decay of first love; it is the exhibition of that particular disease which is engendered by that particular form of wickedness; and its death is the sure prelude of a like death to every Church, and to every person, who taketh on that form of wickedness. The Ephesian bishop did repent, and the Church did rise into very great glory; and for a while, for a long while, its

destruction was averted. But still the seeds remained in its constitution, and it came at length to that fatal end here threatened. The annals of Christendom are not such as to enable us to write the history of the Ephesian Church, but what notices do exist are sufficient to justify the perfect veracity of the Word of God, and the full accomplishment of the threatening in the text. Christ doth not put forth any hypothetical case of evil; He is too charitable to do so; He foreseeth the evil, and teacheth how it may be prevented. Wherever anything stands in Scripture as a warning, it is not imaginary but real evil that is foreseen; and God shows His goodness in foreseeing it, man his wickedness in disregarding His foresight. When God said to Adam, "For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," He put forth that warning which His wisdom foresaw would be necessary; and man, disregarding it, set at nought the good counsel of God, and set up in its stead his own self-sufficiency. The proverb is true, "A man that's warned is half-armed;" but, alas, with that half-armour how seldom do we defend ourselves against the coming evil! so was it with the Church in Ephesus, and so shall we see it proved with all the churches which were so warned.

Ephesus had Paul, John, and Timothy for its pastors. Perhaps the most complete and profound of all St Paul's Epistles was directed to that Church. Nothing remarkable occurred in its history till the year 198, when, Polycrates having called a synod of its bishops to determine concerning the first great question that agitated the Catholic Church—namely, the time of the celebration of Easter—they came to an opposite conclusion from the Roman Church, resting upon the authority of John the Apostle. It had at this time risen to be a metropolitan seat. It is remarkable that both the Church of Scotland and the Church of England held with the Asiatic bishops in this matter against the Roman bishop: nor could he get the Scottish Church to conform in this smallest matter till the ninth century; a continual source of lamentation to the venerable Bede, who was a strong Romanist. Here also Chrysostom, in the year 400, held a synod of seventy bishops, for regulating the affairs of Asia. But the fame of these councils was eclipsed by the third General Council of Ephesus, which was held in the year 431, to give forth decisions against the heresy of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who held a twofold personality to be in Christ, and so defeated the Atonement and the Redemption. This heresy lies at the root of those objections, which are now making by the unstable and the unlearned, against Christ's taking humanity of the virgin's fallen substance. They think that His human nature is a person; and

they cannot conceive it to be under the condition of the fall, without believing that He was a sinner. But in the year 449, Ephesus lost its character by the council held there in which were approved the errors of Eutyches, with circumstances most disgraceful to a meeting of ecclesiastics; whence it was called Prædatorium Ephesinum. Now the city began to fall into ruins; and in the time of the Emperor Justinian, 528–566, its ruinous marbles were transported to Constantinople, and employed in the construction of Sancta Sophia. Towards the end of the eleventh century it was seized by a Turkish pirate, but again delivered out of his hand. In 1306 it was still of such consequence as to suffer from the exactions of the Grand Duke Roger: but two years afterwards it surrendered to the Turks, who removed its inhabitants to another place, where they were afterwards massacred: so exactly even to the very letter was the prophecy fulfilled, of the candlestick being removed out of its place. But still more suffering was it destined to endure; for in 1401 Tamerlane employed a whole month in plundering the city and the suburbs around. The description given of it by Dr Chandler, in his time, is as follows: "The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility. . . . Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge cry in the area of the theatre and the stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no more remembered; and Christianity, which was here nursed by the apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers on in an existence hardly visible." A modern visitant says, "Preserving no vestige of Christianity, except the desolated ruins at Ayasaluck."

Thus have I, dearly beloved brethren, set before you the contents of the first glorious vision of St John,—the revelation of Christ as the High Priest and Universal Bishop of His Church with his first epistle. See what a light it casts upon all things concerning the Church. It is, indeed, a very fountain of instruction to every minister, and to every saint. But to those to whom it was first written, it was more than instruction—it was life and sustenance. They lived in the days of stern persecution: they were just merging into the awful persecutions of the second and third centuries of the Church. These words, therefore, were to the Church as if they had been uttered into the ear of every persecuted man, from the mouth of Christ, on the other side of the vail. Him whom Stephen saw in glory, the first martyrs seemed to hear uttering these glorious words

of promise. More dear to them than other Scripture, therefore, was this book of the Apocalypse; dearer than the rest of the Apocalypse was this vision of the great Bishop and Shepherd of their souls, pledging to every one that overcometh the glories of this earth redeemed from the curse. But that anarch, that old hierarch of evil upon earth, that great Antichristian Head, the Pope of Rome, seeketh lodgment and honour in our land for his damnable pretensions to the glory and the power of the Universal Bishop. He would claim unto himself the divine prerogative of all that which we have vindicated for Christ alone; and like a wolf upon the fold, he is hastening to the prey; and perhaps it may yet come to pass, that we may look to this vision with the same eyes of earnest consolation with which the first Christians did. If truly he, with his cunning marches, shall insinuate himself as universal bishop into this land, then between Belial and Christ there will be no agreement. I pray you to be stirred up with zeal and indignation against the man, who hath claimed for himself the primacy of the universal Church. If there be any honour, if there be any glory unto Christ, in this title of Universal Bishop; if any dignity to the minister, if any consolation to the churches; then upon the Pope, and upon the system that supporteth him, who claimeth, who arrogateth to himself this honour and consolation of Christ, be your anathemas pronounced. We cannot love the good without hating the evil; we cannot honour Christ without dishonouring Antichrist. Therefore I pray you be of one mind to resist the torrents of evil, which now threaten the bulwarks of our land.

LECTURE V.

CHRIST THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP—HIS EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA.

REV. ii. 8-11.

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

IT is a low view and a loose interpretation of the Apocalypse, which would represent those innumerable coincidences which it hath with the old prophecies as an accidental thing, or which would account for its varieties of imagery by the exuberant riches of the Word of God. It is a very common abuse of the Prophets to quote them for the effect of their sublime imagery, and to examine no further into the matter or substance of the prophecy; yea, to abuse and contemn, as unsober men, those who seek for the truth of interpretation. I know not whether more to pity or to blame such tampering with the solemn and solid Word of God, as if any part of it were for ornament, any part of it for poetical or oratorical effect. But to me it is a low view even of poetry and of oratory, to seek for words or figures therein for any other sake than that of interpreting and truly interpreting, the spirit of truth in the poet and orator. But thus to deal with the Word of God, whose very jots and tittles are more solid and substantial than the heavens and the earth, is a most unworthy calumny, yea, even blasphemy, of Him by whose Spirit the words were indited. The poetical language, the rhetorical power, the depth of feeling, the richness of symbol, the exuberance of figure with which it aboundeth, are nothing due to any wanton, unregulated playful humours or tastes of the writers; but they are the most

proper, the most exact, the most complete forms for expressing the fulness of that eternal truth which God would express concerning His Christ; for "the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus." I have learned, God be praised, a higher reverence for the written Word than so to regard, than so to treat it. I have learned to look upon its minutest particles as sacred, and to study it with more care, than wherewith I was wont to read the most condensed demonstrations of the "Principia" of Newton, or the most learned and adorned passages of the "Paradise Lost;" and where I cannot find a consistent meaning for anything which I find written in the Word of God, I no longer think of explaining it away, by what they call a spiritual interpretation, but am content to confess my ignorance, and wait till God send me a teacher, which I ever find Him most ready to do. There is, indeed, a spiritual interpretation of every history and prophecy in God's Word. The events and incidents are but the means of conveying to us insight into the being of God, who is a Spirit, and the being of man, who is an embodied spirit. To raise, therefore, a spiritual interpretation upon the basis of every action of God, whether past or to come, is the bounden duty of every preacher, of every interpreter, and of every reader of God's Word. The rest is but the means, this is the end; the rest is but the acting of the faculty which considers means, this is the acting of the faculty which looks at God. Man was not made merely to consider the machinery of a purpose, but through the consideration of this to see the mind and will of Him who purposeth. Would that such were the spiritual interpretations now contended for! then would there be no objection to literal and historical interpretation, which doth but prepare the materials for the spiritual; bearing to it the same relation which the knowledge of God's ways beareth to the acknowledgment of His wisdom and faithfulness and loving-kindness to the children of men. But that thing which they are contending for, under the name of spiritual interpretation, is really no interpretation at all. It is the privilege of remaining ignorant of the particular, and even general, purposes of God, for which they plead, and justify themselves in following after. They want the liberty of reading whole sections of the Word of God without affixing any meaning to them at all; they want the license of casting the adamantine Word of God over again in the sandy moulds of their own narrow systems of knowledge, faith, and practice. Like school-boys, they would cull flowery passages out of the prophets to ornament their speech withal: like children, they would find sweet morsels here and there, to please their own and their people's ill-regulated taste. As a minister of Christ, I am a guardian of God's Word, and I have a

right to speak. God hath given me a wardenship of the treasure, and I must not sleep upon my watch: therefore I lift up my voice to all concerned in the honour of God's Word, and solemnly protest that this attempt of what are called evangelical writings and preachings, to withdraw the mind of the Church from the prophetic parts of Scripture, is a more dangerous and a more subtle work of Satan than when he moved the Council of Trent to intersperse the Apocrypha through the inspired canon, and our Bible Society to give effect to that daring dishonour of God's faithful Word. Let the men confess that they cannot interpret those passages of the Word, and seek help from the Holy Ghost, who searcheth the deep things of God. Let them honour the office of an interpreter in whom they discern an orthodox faith, a right charitable spirit, and a trembling reverence for the Word of God. An interpretation is that which answers to the words and sentences of the Scripture, understood as the same words and sentences in any other book would be understood; for God doth not write in a cipher, nor doth He deal deceitfully with speech, the organ of intelligence. There is no exoteric and isoteric school of interpretation of the Scripture: there is no Egyptian priestcraft hiding truth in hieroglyphics; nor any mysteries, Greek or Roman; nor any Druidical secrecies, revealed only to a few. The word which is written for all shall hereafter judge all. O Scotland! where now are thy Durhams and thy Flemings, who had delight, and gave delight, in opening the Song, and the Apocalypse, and all the Prophets! Were they poor divines, because they delighted in the prophetical writings? Were they injudicious men, unworthy churchmen, or indifferent ministers and pastors? And when shall England find me an interpreter of Scripture like Joseph Mede the millennarian; upon whom it afflicts me greatly that the heedlessness of a minister of my own church should have cast derision as he hath also upon the most venerable fathers of the primitive times. In the company of such men as Joseph Mede, Irenæus, and Justin Martyr, to be derided is a high honour. But it were far better that he, who thus exposeth his folly and his malice, would learn from them lessons of knowledge, and wisdom, and piety, and how to reverence the awful Word of God. I make no secret of my desire that these unfaithful dealers with the Word of God should be exposed, as you would expose a class of men who have combined to adulterate the food of the people. The time is come when either the treacherous dealers with the Word of God must be exposed, or the Church be taken in the lap of carnal security. It is not for one who believes, as I believe, that a worse deluge than the flood of Noah is near for to come, from which only

faithfulness will save my own house and my own charge; for one who thus believeth, I say, it is cruel, it is infamous, to hold his peace against those who say that all is well, and working well to the glory of God and the good of the Church. I cannot be silent, I cannot hold my peace. If others I cannot save, as Luther said, I must save my own soul: if others I cannot deliver, I must, as saith the Holy Ghost by Ezekiel, deliver my own soul.

Concerning Smyrna, the city in which the angel and Church honoured with the next epistle had their abode, we have the following information given to us in Cave's "Lives of the Fathers," under the life of Polycarp, who was angel of that Church, and is believed to have been the very person addressed in the verses which form the subject of our present lecture:—"A place it was of great honour and renown, and has not only very magnificent titles heaped upon it by the writers of those times, but in several ancient inscriptions set up by the public order of the senate, not long after the time of Adrian, it is styled the chief city of Asia, both for beauty and greatness the most splendid, the metropolis of Asia, and the ornament of Ionia. But it had a far greater and a more honourable privilege to glory in, if it was (as we suppose) the place of Polycarp's nativity, howeves of his education, the seat of his episcopal care and charge, and the scene of his tragedy and martyrdom." It had been, before the time of his suffering, the honoured scene of other martyrs and confessors for the truth, as we find it reported in the Encyclical Letter which the Church of Smyrna wrote to the Churches of Pontus upon the occasion of his death. This letter is partly transcribed, and partly given in summary, by Eusebius, in the fifteenth chapter of the fourth book of his "Ecclesiastical History." It begins thus:—"The Church of God, which is at Smyrna, unto the Church at Philomilium, and unto all the congregations of the holy Catholic Church throughout Pontus, mercy, peace, and the love of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied. We have written unto you, brethren, of such as suffered martyrdom, and of blessed Polycarpus, who signed and sealed the persecution with his own blood." And before they make relation of Polycarpus, they rehearse the constancy and patience of other martyrs, saying, "The beholders were amazed, seeing the flesh of the martyrs rent with scourges, even unto the inner veins and sinews, so that the most secret entrails of their bodies, their bowels, and inward privities, were piteously to be seen; beholding again the sharp shells of sea fish and pebble stones strewed under the martyr's backs and bruised bodies, with every kind of torment that could be devised. Last of all, they were thrown to be torn to pieces, and devoured of wild

beasts. Specially they wrote of Germanicus, that he valiantly endured and overcame, through the grace of God, that corporeal fear of death, graffed in the frail nature of man. For when the proconsul exhorted him to relent, admonished him of his tender years, prayed him to pity his own case, being now in the flower of his youth, he, without intermission, enticed the beasts to devour him, yea, constrained and compelled that with speed he might be despatched of this cruel and wicked life; which patience and constancy of the blessed martyr, and of the whole Christian nation, the multitude of infidels beholding, suddenly cried out, Remove the wicked, seek out Polycarpus." I shall add one other extract, as casting light upon Smyrna, the seat of this Church, and upon Polycarp, its bishop, before proceeding with my subject; likewise taken from the life of Polycarp, in Cave's "Lives of the Fathers:"—"It cannot be deemed but that Smyrna was next to Ephesus, as St Clemens says that city also was, and that St John seems to have had a more than ordinary regard to that Church, it being, next Ephesus, the first of those seven famous Asian churches to whom he directed his epistles, and St Polycarp at this time bishop of it; for that he was that angel of the Church at Smyrna to whom the apocalyptical epistle was sent, is not only highly probable, but, by a learned man, put past all question. I must confess that the character and circumstances ascribed by St John to the angel of that Church, seem very exactly to agree with Polycarp, and with no other bishop of that Church, (about those times especially,) that we read of in the history of the Church; and whoever compares the account of St Polycarp's martyrdom, with the notices and intimations which the Apocalypse there gives of that person's sufferings and death, will find the prophecy and the event suit together. That which may seem to make most against it, is the long time of his presidency over that see; seeing, by this account, he must sit at least seventy-nine years bishop of that Church, from the latter end of Domitian's reign (when the Apocalypse was written) to the persecution under M. Aurelius, when he suffered: to which no other solution needs to be given, than that his great, nay, extreme age at the time of his death, renders it not at all improbable; especially when we find, several ages after, that Remigius, bishop of Rheims, sat seventy-nine years bishop of that place." From that time, until our own day, which witnessed the massacre of the Greek inhabitants, Smyrna has been the seat of continual persecution, and, notwithstanding, retains the most flourishing church at present subsisting in Asia; fulfilling to the letter the promise of this epistle, as we shall show in its proper place, after we have opened in order the three several parts of the epistle:—

I. Christ's designation therein.
II. His charge to the angel of that Church.
III. The Spirit's exhortation to all the members thereof.

I. "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive." This designation, like all the seven, is in substance contained in the vision emblematical of the universal Bishop with which the epistles are introduced, being part of the words which his glorified, yet gracious, Master spake unto the astonished seer. Chap. i. ver. 17, 18, "And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." When we explained these words, in the course of our exposition upon the first chapter, we had space merely to open the doctrine which they contain, and referred the details and application thereof until we should meet the words again in the superscription of the letter to the Church in Smyrna, (see p. 235.) Now, therefore, we are called upon, both by our pledge and by our inclination, to enter fully into the import and the dignity of these words, "the first and the last, who became dead and lived;" and to show wherefore Christ should deem them worthy of being used to designate one of the seven attributes of His glorious high priesthood. The style consisteth of two parts; the former expressed in these words, "the first and the last;" the latter in these words, "which became dead and lived." Into the mystery of each of these truths I would now reverently inquire.

First, "These things saith the first and the last." This is now the third time since the commencement of these labours that we have been called upon to meditate the profound truth of Christ, embodied to reason in these words. I say a truth of *Christ* embodied to reason, rather than a truth of *God;* because Godhead being essentially incomprehensible, unsearchable, and inexpressible, cannot be embodied by any words to reason or to any other intelligence, otherwise than through Christ, who is the Godhead brought or rather bringing Himself within the bounds and limits of what a creature can know, express, and apprehend. All that language can do, in speaking of God, is to deny that He hath the attributes of a creature: by negatives, and by those only, can we speak of the infinite God. For example, that very word "infinite" signifies not bounded, not ended. If any one should object to this cardinal truth, that we can, for example, assert positively, that God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent; I answer that these words do not express attributes of the incomprehensible, but of the comprehensible God; not of God the Father, but of God the

Christ. For to know all things, to do all things, and to fill and possess all things with His presence, carries us not a jot beyond the bounds of creation, beyond the region of *things;* and therefore they are not expressions of the unbounded Godhead, but of Godhead within the bounds of creation. So, in like manner, those expressions of God derived from the conscience,—such as that He is holy and faithful and true, and loving and merciful,—are within the bounds of pure reason, are in fact properties of perfect reason, and therefore can in no wise contain the fulness of Godhead unembodied, but only the fulness of Godhead embodied in Jesus Christ. And in a word, if any man were to say that he could comprehend God, by word or by idea, he would make himself co-equal with, yea, and of larger capacity than God; forasmuch as that which comprehends is larger than that which is comprehended therein. We lay it down, therefore, as an indubitable truth, as a truth of the first order, that no one by searching can find out God; that words cannot tell out His essential being, nor thought possess His invisible ways; for as the heaven is high above the earth, so are His thoughts above our thoughts, and His ways above our ways.

The question therefore necessarily ariseth, And what then is it that words do express; and what then is it that reason doth apprehend, if so be they express and apprehend not the eternal and unchangeable Godhead? I answer, Words express and reason apprehendeth the Christ of God. And is not the Christ of God the very God. Yea, verily: yet is He that very God bringing Himself within the limits, first of the intelligible and then of the visible. And when the eternal Godhead hath thus come within the bounds of intelligence in the Christ, He can be spoken of by word to intelligent beings when they shall be created, and by them He can be apprehended. Now this subsistence of Godhead within the bounds of intelligence is sustained in the person of the Son, and not in the person of the Father, nor in the person of the Holy Ghost. The Son consenteth, for the common purposes of Godhead, to subsist within the limited bounds of the Christ, wherein He shall ever call the Father GOD, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the expression of His subordinate personality, as the generated Son in the co-equal and co-essential Godhead. It is proper to Him, as Son eternally begotten, to take upon Him he submissive dutiful and lovely part of condescending out of the infinite Godhead into the finite Christ; and without changing, or separating from, His Godhead, to put forth for ever its energy in the way of self-emptying and humble condescension into a limited form; which limited form, for its properties we speak

not of now, but may give to it its name amongst other intelligences, which is the risen God-man. Now, while thus it is proper to the Son to uphold and sustain the subsistence of the Christ, it is proper to the Holy Ghost to bring that subsistence into realised form. The Father's property it is to originate the form; the Son's property it is to give it person; the Holy Ghost's to give it life and being: and their communion is, to educe out of it the various ages of time, the various forms of life, the various things of creation; which all, as they come forth from the fulness of the Christ, may acknowledge Him as the origin and originator, as the creator and upholder of their life. And thus it is that the Godhead, anterior to all creation and before all worlds, took to Himself a limited form of subsistence, which in the Proverbs is called Wisdom (chap. viii.); and in the Gospel by John is called the Word; and in the First Epistle of John is called the Life; and in all Scripture is called the Christ. This is the Divine subsistence which is expressible by word and apprehensible by reason. This is that of which all Scripture doth testify; which also, all creation doth acknowledge and declare. This is He of whom the acts, offices, and dignities are thus expressed in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews:—"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also, he made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" And of this same being, the Christ, it is still more fully written in the opening of the Epistle to the Colossians:—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-em ence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made

peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself: by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."

Now it further remaineth to the complete unfolding of this most precious truth, that I should shew what most necessary and otherwise unattainable ends are served by this great act of Godhead, before the world was. And first, it realiseth the existence of Godhead before all time, and beyond all space of creation. Here is an act of Godhead in Himself, exterior to creation, and therefore altogether out of creation. The act is the setting up of the Christ, "from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," (Prov. viii. 23.) And not only is the existence of Godhead thereby realised, but its existence in divers personalities, and also the relation of these personalities to one another, is thereby discovered. In the same passage of the Proverbs is thus written of these two, the person of God and the person of Wisdom: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." And in the sublime exordium of the Gospel by John, it is said of the Word that He was with God, and that He was God, and that He came forth from the bosom of God: and in the passage quoted above from the Colossians, it is said that it pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell: expressions these which convey in the strongest terms the diversity of persons in the Godhead, the subordination of place in the unity of substance, between these two, the Father and the Son. But this unity of substance between two divers persons can only be maintained, even in idea, by the existence of a third person, who shall be the bond of that union. If the Father in His own personality were to speak or to do anything to the Son, to the end of His coming into the bounds of the Christ, or if He were to express or shew forth any affection to Him, in that subsistence, then doth the Father himself come within the limits thereof, and unlimitable infinite Godhead ceases to be the inalienable property of the Father;—ceases, indeed, from its unchangeableness, incomprehensibility, and all the other attributes which are essential to its being worshipped by the creature. Therefore, most necessary it is to the

end of God, which is His own glory and worship, and the creature's blessedness therein, that, in holding communion with His Son in the limited form of Christ, He should do it by another person, who being God, may, for this very end of communicating between God the Father and Christ the Son, reduce Himself in order to pass between, and fill the Christ with the continual supply of the Father's good pleasure; and having received from Christ the expression of His perfect duty, pass again into the Godhead of the Father; and so without bringing the Father into limitation, and without taking Christ out of limitation, may, by a continual circulation, preserve the oneness of mind, the identity of will, purpose, and act, between God and Christ, between Godhead in the infinite and Godhead in the finite, between Godhead in the absolute and Godhead in the non-absolute. And thus, by the setting up of the Christ before the world was, is the existence of God out of creation, and His subsistence within Himself in three persons, and His enjoyment within Himself, demonstrated in the only way in which I believe it to be capable of demonstration.

Again, this setting up of the Christ by the persons of the Godhead before the world was, doth make a creation possible, and doth give to creation its proper place and use and relation unto God. Creation hath a being only in virtue of the Christ who is already set up; and only through Him hath it, or can it have, any relation to or communication with God. For, as hath been said already, God in Himself is essentially incommunicable, ineffable, incomprehensible, while creation is essentially derived, determined, and limited; and, therefore, there could exist no communication whatever between the absolute Godhead and a bounded creation, or a bounded intelligence; for there is no way from the infinite into the finite opened up. Creation in such a case, if creation there could be such, would necessarily be a God unto itself, and consequently a rival God, which God, who is very goodness, would never permit. To connect creation, therefore, with the Godhead, in those bonds of knowledge, worship, and obedience, which are the only sources of its well-being, the setting up of Christ as THE FIRST was absolutely necessary: and, though I will not say that the setting up of Christ was for the end of creation, but for the higher end of God's enjoyment of himself, and perhaps also for the end of realising the personalities of the Godhead in unity, most certainly necessary for the apprehension of the same by us; yet I will say, that creation could not have been without the previous constitution of the Christ, who is therefore said to be before all things, and likewise the firstborn of every creature. To the consistency of this great idea, it is essential that the Christ

be not a creature, be not a creation; for if a creature or creation He were, as the believers in a pre-existent humanity erroneously hold, then God were not known out of creation, because He is not known out of Christ; and creation, instead of deploring its own instability and sinfulness, would have had to boast of its stability and sinlessness. What then is the Christ, if He be not a creature, and if He be not the absolute God? He is the purpose of the absolute God realised in a person, which person is the Son of God, very God of very God, in whose Christhood the Father beholdeth His purpose all complete, and through the means of the Holy Ghost doth express His delight therein, and receive His homage by the same Holy Ghost therefrom. And the Son of God in His Christhood doth constitute the ages, and create the world, and do all things according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, in whom we are chosen before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Creation, therefore, and redemption, and election, are all seen in the Christ, and communicated with, by the Father through the Spirit, ere ever they had an outward being; and as the Christ is beloved, so is every creature beloved of the Father. This is the high birthplace of every creature, this is the noble birthright of every creature, to have been beloved in the Christ by the Father, before the world was. As the Father loved Christ, so was creation loved of Him; and as the Father loved Christ, so are we the Church still loved of the Father, (John xvii. 23.) And as the Father loved Christ, so shall all the things in heaven and in earth, when recapitulated into Christ, be loved of the Father; and as creation was seen in Christ before it had a being, perfect, and beautiful, and beloved, it shall be gathered into Him and stand in Him through ages and ages. This is necessary to be known and had in remembrance, in order that every creature may know what a Father it hath in God, in order that every prodigal creature may know the heinousness of its offence in sinning against such a Father, in order that the exceeding sinfulness of sin may be known, in order that the exceeding long-suffering of God to sinners may be known, in order that the eternal love of God which moved redemption may be known to have been always in Him; for what is the love of redemption, but a love coequal with the love He hath for His own Son; and if He hath shown such a love to the creature in its fallen state, surely He had no less a love to the creature when He brought it into being. A love to it, not out of Christ; for out of Christ it neither is nor can be, save by the judgment of the second death,—concerning which more hereafter; but a love to it as a part of the fulness in Christ, which by coming out of Him did not cease

to be His, according as it is written in that exordium of John's Gospel, so oft referred to, "He came unto His own" (things, or creatures, or possessions, τὰ ἴδια,) "but His own" (persons, οἱ ἴδιοι) "received him not."

These truths, equally essential to the knowledge of God, and to a creature's knowledge of itself, as beloved of God, as sinning against Him and beloved still, and to be beloved, ay, and until it shall have rejected its Christ made known unto it; these truths, I say, of God, and of Christ, and of creation, I have here a little more enlarged upon, though they occur everywhere in these discourses, as everywhere they ought to occur in all Christian discourse, to the end that I may give full explanation to the expression, "the first and the last;" and afterwards to the expression, "which became dead and liveth." The first, He is in existence before God, or with God, or beside God. Though as God He is not to be called first, in respect of origination, being originated by the Father, (and as to time it hath nothing to do with the Godhead at all,) He is the first of subsistences with God, and beside God, and before God. Prov. viii. 30, "Then I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." In the sense of His Christhood, and not of His Godhead, is it said in the text, "He is the first." In relation to the creatures, and not in relation to God, is it said, He is the first; and the intention of so speaking concerning Himself is, to give to the creatures the knowledge of their origin and fountain-head from Himself, to teach them that they are not self-existent, but deriving their existence from Him, though He appeared late in the order of creation; that though He had not been born and constituted a creature some hundred years before, yet was He the first in the order of existences, before Adam, before angels, before all things. It is to claim to Himself that precedency which is His due; that creatorship, that constituting and upholding of all things which is His due. To the end that this truth might be known of His Christhood, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" to the end it might be known from what pre-eminence of place, from what primordiality of being He did, in His gentleness and love, condescend, when far on in the generations of men, He took His place as the child of an obscure daughter of David. To take precedency of David, as not only David's offspring, but David's root, (Rev. xxii. 15;) to take precedency of Moses, as Moses' master, the Son and Heir, whose servant Moses was, (Heb. iii.;) to take precedency of Abraham, before whom, saith he, "I am;" to take precedency of Adam, who was but the type of Him that was to come; to claim to Himself the Melchizedec dignity of being without father or

mother, without beginning of days or end of life, He so solemnly insisteth that He is THE FIRST. And not for this end alone, of asserting to Himself His proper rank and order of being, as the Christ, as "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," (Heb. xiii. 8;) but likewise to teach all the practical truths, the great moral truths, which flow from that mother-truth, He doth so oft make use of these simple words, "I am the first." Of which great moral truths these be the chief: first, That in right of the first He asked and required the homage of all things created and made, that they should look to Him as their Parent, and yield to Him their obedience, and not go about to think to come at God by any other way than through the honour of Him as the great creating, redeeming, sustaining Head. Secondly, To teach them their unity in Himself, all diverse in rank, order, and individuals; all divided by the wounds, schisms, and strifes of sin and death; all disunited by space and time, as the creatures be;—that yet in Him they have their origin, their habitation, their unity: and therefore, if they would have peace, to Him they should draw with all their affections, and in Him suffer themselves to take root and abide, in Him find reconciliation with God, and with one another. Thirdly, By taking to Himself this title, "I am the first," He doth exalt Himself above the powers of every other creature whatsoever, above Satan, above wicked angels, above wicked men, above the world, above all confederated powers of evil. Such pre-eminence of place, such primordiality of time, He claimeth in this place, to comfort and sustain the heart of the angel of the Church of Smyrna, who was about to be tried with sore tribulations, and the heart of all good and faithful men, who should be put to the test by the rulers of the darkness of this world. He saith in the ears of every poor and afflicted creature, "Fear not, I am the first;" and with such words He would comfort and strengthen the heart of every solitary troubled creature under the face of heaven. "Fear not," saith He, "I am the first." These things when I reflect upon, my soul is filled with admiration. I lose myself in the glorious condescension of God in Christ, of Christ in Jesus, of Jesus in death. I see the love of God, yea, the grace of God, as an eternal principle of His being manifested in the act of God's becoming Christ in the person of the Son. I see creation, with Christ its Head, as a unit, one though apparently so diversified and contradictory. I see creation, with Christ as its Head, as an harmonious whole, consenting in the expression and effecting of the purpose of God; I see it perfect, as God's conception; I see it beautiful, as God's own idea; I see it harmonious, as God's own unity; I see it stable, as God's own being in the person of the Son. There is something very awful in what I

see through the knowledge of this truth, that Jesus is the first. It seemeth to me, as if from the unity of my own person I could somewhat discern in the constitution of the Christ that idea which the Father saw, that purpose which the Father purposed in Him. It is a high and mysterious and magnificent thought.

By this designation of our blessed Lord, "I am the first," I understand it to be asserted, that He is the archetype of all creation; unto the figure of which it is conformed, of the unity of which it sendeth out the several parts; and into which the redeemed parts of creation shall be gathered again, so as to exhibit through eternity that fulness, which in Christ is summed up. Moreover, this designation, "the first," doth set Him out, as that image of the Godhead, which the eye of creation is capable of perusing, which the mind of creation is capable of apprehending; while, at the same time, in apprehending Him, we do not apprehend what is out of God, we do not apprehend a creature, which like other creatures might betray its Creator and utter falsehood; but we apprehend a subsistence in God, very God of very God, who dwelleth in the bosom of God, and cometh thence to shew us clearly of the Father: in one word, God manifested, God revealed, God intelligible. Now this primordial subsistence, the Christ of God, is that Great Original before all worlds, from which all worlds do take their form, and the law of their being. He it is, in whose image man was made; He it is, who walked with Adam in the garden, and with whom Adam had sympathy and fellowship in all respects. He it is, whom God presented to the old serpent as his future destroyer; He, whom Enoch prophesied of, as the Avenger; He, whom Abraham knew as the Promiser; He, whom Moses saw as the Jehovah of the covenant; He, for whom David's throne and Solomon's were upreared, and shall be upreared again; He, whose glorious person Ezekiel and Daniel oft beheld; He, who was born of a virgin, becoming then a man, Jesus of Nazareth, which is the Christ; He, whom God testified to be His own Son, by the resurrection and ascension, and session on His throne, and gift of the Holy Ghost to dispense unto his Church; He, who shall come again in his Father's glory, and His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, uniting in His person these three spheres of being and of glory, the sphere of Godhead, which is His by nature or essence; the sphere of manhood, with all its dependencies of a visible world, which is His by assumption and redemption; the sphere of the invisible or angelic subsistences, which is His by sustentation, for He sustaineth them from falling, as is beautifully signified in the ladder which Jacob saw in vision, whereon angels of God ascended and descended between heaven

and earth. And then, when He shall be exhibited in the glory of His Father, and His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, He shall be known to be the last as well as the first. The first, inasmuch as from Him, and out of Him, all things proceeded by creation: The last, as into Him all things shall be gathered, and stand together by regeneration. As the fountain-head of the river from which its waters flow He is the first, and the mighty ocean into which they flow He is the last; so, even so, is Christ the first and the last of all creation.

Now in thus designating Himself as the last as well as the first, He doth present Himself unto His servant, the angel of the Church in Smyrna, as the all-enduring one, whom no power shall shake, whom no time shall wear away, whom no change shall alter in the least lineament of His being: expressing, as I judge, the same ground of confidence in Him which the Church thus expresseth in the 102d Psalm, when she is brought to the lowest ebb of feebleness, and standeth in the terror of instant dissolution:—"I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee." When it is said, "I am the last," it is signified that in the latter end of time He only shall live, He only shall survive along with those who take refuge under the shadow of His wings, and are builded up into the membership of His body. But for all those who shall withstand or reject Him, they shall be cast out into the outer darkness, and misery, and impotence, and corruption of the second death, answering as I conceive nearly to the thing which is expressed in the 90th Psalm: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world: even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction: and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." This designation is taken towards that Church and its angel, which was destined to endure the most heavy trials and persecutions, and which through them all was to come victorious, and to abide, as at this day it doth abide, in no small strength nor mean condition. Therefore doth He present Himself as the stable One who knoweth no change, but in the midst

of change standeth, the column which upbeareth the world, and preventeth it from passing away. He presents Himself in the midst of vicissitudes, bereavements, and losses, as the Refuge which never faileth, as the Abode which shall never decay, as the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother, as the Lover who loveth unto the end. To His Church, launched upon the stormy billows of the world, He presenteth Himself as the Anchor of her faith, fixed within the vale beyond the world's reach. To every poor minister buffeted with the reproach of the wicked, and beat upon with the evil powers of this world, and of the spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places, He presenteth Himself as the Shepherd-King who will restore his soul, and with His rod and staff sustain him in the valley of the shadow of death. He said unto Peter, when he had notably confessed Him to be the Christ the Son of God, "Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." So likewise saith He to the angel of the Church of Smyrna, 'I am the first and the last; fear not; join thyself to me, and be perpetual; enter into me, and brave the desolation of the second death.' As the former epistle had respect to pastoral care, to episcopal jurisdiction, to the feeding of the flock in love; so hath this epistle, from the first to the last, respect to the sufferings and persecutions of the Church, to its trials and vicissitudes, to its escapes and deliverances; until it shall stand in perpetual safety, beyond the power of the second death. In the Church of Smyrna was to be given the demonstration of Christ's faithfulness stronger than death, and mightier than the powers of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and therefore every word of it tells of the everlasting constancy of Christ—presenting Him unto all angels of the churches, and unto all churches as their sure defence and continual preservation, in whom they may have, through faith, a perpetuity in that place where their candlestick hath been set up. The former epistle did exhibit the principle of every Church's decay to be the declension of their love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and warneth them against this fatal consumption; but this epistle exhibiteth, on the other hand, the ground and assurance of a Church's perpetuity against all accidents, against all revolutions of empires, against all apostasies of surrounding churches, against all persecutions, wars, destructions; to the end that any Church whatsoever and every Church may be assured of stability till the Lord come; provided they will cling with steadfastness to Him which was the first and is the last, which was dead and is alive. And therefore it is nothing to be doubted that Christ's purpose towards every Church that He planteth is, that it should not be rooted up till He come again. And whatever churches have fallen down are to be

looked upon as having fallen down by reason of their own refusal of Christ, the Foundation-stone tried and precious, sure and steadfast. And those churches now upon the earth, which are mourning over a departed glory, ought to strengthen the things that remain, and return unto the Lord who hath smitten them, join themselves to the first and the last, and rest assured that they shall be builded up again, and established like the Rock of Ages. I feel this to be a great consolation, and I thank the great Head of the Church for the strength and assurance which it hath brought to my soul, as the minister of a Church of the living God. I feel a confidence for myself and for my Church, that if we will together give good heed to this epistle, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. Let us then with the more diligence proceed in its exposition.

2. "These things saith he which was dead and is alive;" literally, "which became dead and lived." To the understanding of the truth and the consolation in these words contained, it is, first of all, necessary that we should remember the subject of whom they are spoken. They are spoken of Christ, by which name is signified Godhead, subsisting under an intelligible form in the person of the Son. The person who died, therefore, is the Son of God, who is very God of very God. For nothing hath the orthodox Church in all time so zealously contended as to affirm that God was born of a virgin, and that God died upon the cross; and as it is written in the 20th chapter of the Acts that God hath purchased us with His own blood, because in these expressions they contended for this truth of truths—that the thing, the holy thing conceived of the virgin, was in the origin of its existence inseparably united and made eternally one with the second person of the glorious Godhead. Therefore in our catechism it is said "that the Son of God was conceived in the womb of the virgin, and born of her, yet without sin." On the other hand, no point hath been more diligently argued, and more explicitly pronounced by the Catholic Church, in all ages of its existence, than this: That the Godhead cannot suffer nor be tempted, nor with any creature affection whatever be moved or influenced: because, if so, Godhead would cease to be a subsistence above, apart from, creation, all-sufficient in itself, subject to no change, and incapable of change. How, then, it may be asked, could God be born, could God be crucified, could God suffer and die, according to the constant faith of the Catholic Church? Here is an apparent contradiction between two capital points of the orthodox faith. How are they to be reconciled? They are to be reconciled by the doctrine concerning the Christ delivered above, and in no other way whatever. Before the world was, the Persons of the Godhead set up among themselves the Christ, as

hath been said, and the Son took that form of subsistence, and was God, subsisting as the Word, the Logos, before the world was. This glorious fulness of the Godhead, not absolute, but contained, and containing all purposes, forms of being, providences, and events whatsoever, is what Christ speaketh of under the name, "The glory which I had with thee before the world was." Now contemplate the Son of God thus subsisting as the Christ before creation, and you have the Being "which was made flesh, and dwelt among us:" which died upon the accursed tree; or, as it is in the text, became dead, and lived again. He is not God in His absoluteness who doth so, but God within the limits of the word; not God absolute, but the Logos, whose person indeed is the Son of God, but whose subsistence is not as the absolute Godhead, but as the Godhead intelligible. Now this is He which was born, and yet Godhead was not born: this is He which was tempted of evil, and yet Godhead cannot be tempted of evil: this is He which died, and yet Godhead cannot die. God first realises to himself a subsistence, as the Word in the person of the Son; and the Son thus subsisting, not in His absolute Godhead, but His limited Godhead, becomes flesh, and becomes dead. His Godhead all the while remaining unchanged, His Christhood alone passeth through the condition of humiliation and death; and yet the identity of the person is preserved, whether you look to His subsistence in Godhead absolute, or His subsistence in Christhood before the worlds; or His subsistence in sinful flesh, which He made sinless, redeeming it out of death; or His present subsistence in the throne of God; or His future subsistence as the King and Priest of a regenerate world. The unintelligible part of this mystery is, how Godhead should come out of the absolute form into the relative form of the Christ; and how the person subsisting as the Christ should likewise subsist as the absolute God. To attempt to explain this, to attempt to understand it, is to attempt to make God comprehensible, which is no less than to attempt to make Him a creature —yea, and the creation of a creature: for this action of Godhead, by which He becometh comprehensible, is an action above and beyond the comprehensible; is an action to the end of becoming comprehensible, and must therefore remain for ever incomprehensible. This, therefore, I attempt not to explain: this I pronounce inexplicable to man or angel. But from the point at which the Christ is set up, and God in the person of the Son becomes active in Christ, from that point it is all intelligible, all within the bounds of pure reason, which to know is life eternal. That reasonable man who turns aside from the knowledge of God, from the full and perfect knowledge of God in Christ revealed, is guilty of an enormous sin, which I shall

not name nor judge, but of which I will say this, that it is the heaviest sin of the Church in these times. For, alas! she is contented to be ignorant of those high points of truth and reason which I am continually straining my faculties to express: LABOR INGRATUS: labour truly without reward; yea, labour with much contumely, suspicion, and accusation pursued, if I were to look to the multitude of men and churchmen around me, my brethren, and my fathers; but labour well bestowed and most delightsome, when I look unto the Light of life, when I look into the community of it, which I myself have partaken; and when I look unto those who, refusing the fellowship of a dark world and a blinded understanding, do seek and find their fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Of the Son of God, then, subsisting as the Christ within the bounds of reason and of word, it is said in the text that He became dead. In the first of John it is said that He became flesh, but here it is said that He became dead. Now between these two spheres of humiliation there is a great difference, upon which I would make some observations: that is to say, in order to show more perfectly what is meant by Christ's becoming dead, I would follow Him in His progress thereto by His first becoming flesh. Flesh is the region of humanity, the bound and compass which God hath fixed for the definition of His creature man; not the body alone, nor the reasonable soul alone, but the body and the soul or spirit, the visible and the invisible parts of man, subsisting in union with one another. When, therefore, it is said, Christ became flesh, it is signified that He who heretofore had subsisted in the glory and fulness of Godhead intelligible, did empty Himself thereof, and come into the condition and limits and passions and affections of manhood, such as manhood is experienced by us to be, such as manhood is by God defined to be. This is incarnation in the abstract idea of it—that from being the Pleroma, the fulness of the Godhead, the Logos, the Word of God, subsisting not in any creature form, but in the bosom of the Father abiding, and its vastness filling, and its blessedness enjoying, He should take upon Him and be brought into the conditions of space and time, and endure whatever pains, sufferings, diseases, troubles, and affections, an embodied soul and quickened body are heir unto. This, I say, is the abstract idea of incarnation, and is the proper measure of the humiliation voluntarily undertaken therein. As to the peculiar condition of the flesh which He took, whether fallen or unfallen, sinless or sinful, it is a question not of the substance, but of the accidents of incarnation; for incarnation might have been in Adam's unfallen substance, as well as in Mary's fallen substance. It would have been equally incarnation in either case. But if in

Adam's unfallen substance it would have had no connexion with our fallen condition, no sympathy with our trials, no affliction with our afflictions, no share in our sufferings, no fellowship of our mortal ills, no conjunction with us in our death, and no bearing upon our condition beyond the grave. If He was incarnate of Adam's unfallen substance, incarnation hath no comfort in it to a sinner: as man, it touches me and honours me, but, as a sinful man, it touches me not at all. As a mortal man, it yields me no life of immortality; as an enslaved man, it yields me no tidings of redemption; as a rebellious man, at war with my God, it yields me no knowledge of atonement. It is, indeed, a great condescension of God, which, like the devils, I may look at and tremble; which, like Balaam, I may see, but not nigh: condescension of God there is in it to creation, but to a sinner there is no grace. Wide, wide of my wants it is: and if so it is that Christ took Adam's unfallen substance, I, a poor fallen sinner, am debarred from hope of liberty, and must hang my harp upon the willows; or, if I take it into my hand, must strike the note of hopes defeated, of human redemption for ever forsaken of God, of mankind forlorn, and the world for ever lost. But it is not so. Whoso saith it is so, let him be anathema. If an angel from heaven should come and say it is so, let him be anathema maranatha.

When I said above, that to the idea of incarnation in its abstract form, redemption from sin and death was not necessary, I did not mean to say that it was not of the essence of the purpose of God, wherein Christ is contemplated as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is as much of the purpose of God, that Christ should die, as that He should be made flesh: and therefore when the man who was His forerunner and messenger to announce Him, pointed his finger at Him, he spake these words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" announcing Him as the sacrificial Lamb, whom God had sanctified and sent into the world for the end of taking away its sin. And upon this resteth He His claim to the Father's love; not that He had become flesh, but that He was to give His life for the sheep. And wherever in Scripture this great mystery is celebrated, an essential part of it consisteth in His dying: as, for example, in the second chapter of the Philippians; "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And in the opening of the Hebrews; "God, who in sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets,

hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." His becoming flesh, therefore, is not to be separated in the purpose of God, from His becoming dead: to the unfolding of which truth we now proceed.

Death is the stamp of God, which distinguisheth a sinful state of the creature. "The wages of sin is death." "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Putting Christ out of the question, no one can deny that death is the one thing which differenceth the creature void of sin from the creature under sin; the creature in its creation state, from the creature in the state wherein by its own actings it hath brought itself; or in one word the unfallen from the fallen. I do not say that death proves a creature to be actually sinful, because then it would prove Christ to be sinful; but I say that it proves a creature to have lost its creation standing, and to be upon another footing before God, which is the footing of redemption, resting upon another base than that base originally given to it by God. Christ, to become mortal, must therefore not be created, but generated of a woman: His generation is of the Holy Ghost, but it is not creation. If it were creation, then He must fall before He can die: but being generated, He himself, as to His human nature, stands upon a redemption footing, and therefore is mortal. And in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, He is as continually, ay, and more frequently spoken of, as being saved than as saving, as being redeemed than as reedeming. Psal. xvi. 9–11; xxii. 20, 21; xxviii. 8; xxxv. 17, to the end; xl. passim; xli. passim; lv. 16; lvi. 11, 13; lxix. 29; lxxi. 20; xci. 15, 16; cxvi. 4, 8; cxviii. 5–22: Isa. viii. 17, 18; xlix. 7, 8; li. 6, 7; liii. 9–12; lv. 5: Acts ii. 22–24; iii. 15; xiii. 30: Romans iv. 24; vi. 9, 10; viii. 11: 1 Cor. xv. 15–17: Eph. i. 20: Phil. ii. 8, 9: Heb. ii. 9, 10; v. 7–9; xiii. 20: 1 Pet. i. 21. And the same is declared to have been the object and the end of those prayers, and supplications, and tears, which He offered in the days of His flesh (Heb. v. 7;) and in one word, the acting of Godhead in Him, which is the Father's acting, is altogether made void, unless we look upon Christ as standing in the condition of needing to be saved, and of having been saved in virtue of His continual faith upon the Father. Where then, it may be said, is the acting of His own Godhead? This question contains in it a funda-

mental error; as if, when we showed the acting of the Father's Godhead, we did not also show the acting of His own Godhead, which would divide the substance of the Godhead. If a man, being shown the Father's acting in support and preservation of Christ, turn about and say, But where is the acting of the Son's Godhead? I say, that man makes two Godheads, and is a Polytheist, a believer of more gods than one. And if a man say that Christ's human nature needed no salvation, preservation, redemption, but was in itself an unfallen thing, then that man makes void the Godhead altogether in Christ, and is a worshipper of unfallen human nature. And again, if a man say that Christ conceived and born, had no need of continual sustenance, salvation, redemption, from the Father, that man doth deny that His Godhead was at all operative after His conception. But if a man say, as do all the Scriptures, that He, by being conceived of the Virgin, was brought into the weakness, and infirmity, and trials, and temptations, common to all mankind, and was only delivered out of them by the continual acting of faith upon the Father, and reception from the Father of Godhead power, which He used to defeat, with every faculty of the soul and every member of the body, all His and our enemies, then doth that man well hold and maintain that in all His actions Godhead acted, and that to the holiness of all His actions Godhead was necessary; and in one word, that a human nature and a divine nature were present in every action of that person, the Son of man, who was born of the Virgin. And, moreover, he who thus maintaineth that Christ, when conceived and born of the Virgin, needed, in order to be saved from sin, the continual acting of Godhead, doth therein maintain that no creature whatever can prevail to do a good action otherwise than by the same Godhead power. For if human nature; even when informed by the person of the Son of God, could not in that personality do a good action without the sustenance and information of the Divine nature, without the acting of the Father, by the Holy Ghost, to the Son, who receiving this divine power might with it inform, strengthen, sanctify, and redeem His every member; if, I say, the Son of God when born of a woman could not otherwise than by the Godhead nature be good, and do good, how is it to be believed, or to be imagined, that a created person, a limited being, a man in the same nature subsisting, should be able to be good or to do good. We are all taught by the instance of Christ, that, to be good and to do good, we must receive power from the Father in like manner communicated; that is to say, the Father, or the absolute Godhead, without departing from His absoluteness, without changing His form of the infinite, doth through the Spirit communicate unto Christ

divine power, which He may exercise by the same Spirit, now acting as the Spirit of Christ, and communicate to each of us who believe on the Father, power to do good and to be good. This now is the explanation of His becoming dead; and thus explained, "His becoming dead and living again" is the most pregnant truth of God.

He became dead, in order to show that God out of sinful flesh, such as we now do all possess, could bring forth holiness such as is required of us all. His Son the Christ became flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; that is, He came into the experience, and the obligation, and the suffering, which all flesh is heir to; and by the power of Godhead He took this flesh out of the hands of all His and our enemies, and presented it unto God at all times, and in all ways, pure and spotless, whereby was shown the grace and power of our God. In like manner, further to prove the power of Godhead, He became dead. Now it hath been made a question how He who never sinned could die. But the question, if a question is to be made of it, is far larger; how He that never sinned could suffer. The answer to both questions is, "Because His human nature was held of sinful Adam. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself took part of the same." And the part which He took was subject to the same laws, as the lump of which He took it: and so He became dead by becoming flesh. Those who ignorantly or heretically maintain that He took unfallen flesh, or that in conception His flesh was brought into a different law of being from ours, can give no account of His death whatever, so as to justify God. They do indeed talk long and loud about its being vicarious and sacrificial, to cleanse away our sins, which no orthodox man ever denied. But if Christ's flesh were unfallen, how could it die without God's violating the law of creation, which is not death but life? What would we say of any one who should affirm that God made Adam for suffering and death? Where then were God's goodness in creation? But what better is it to say that Christ took Adam's nature in order to die therein? The thing is monstrous, and never was heard of in the Church till now. Preachers, indeed, in the large liberty of discourse, may be found, when insisting upon the purity of Christ's human nature, to have now and then likened it, and perhaps even identified it with Adam's before the fall; but that any theologian should maintain as a thesis that Christ's substance was in the state of Adam, is what I, in the course of my reading or hearing, have never met with, save in some schismatical and heretical pamphleteers of this day. Equally erroneous is it to maintain that, by the miraculous generation, the substance of his flesh was brought

into a third state; neither such as Adam's nor such as the Virgin's, such as no one possesseth, and no one therefore can define or sympathise with, except by negatives;—as, that it was not like ours, it was not predisposed to temptation, it was not inclined to evil, and so forth. For what law appoints this third estate of flesh to die? If the root of sin was taken out of it by extraordinary generation, how was the fruit of death not taken out of it also? And who shall tell the properties of this metaphysical substance, this nondescript body? Was pain to it pain? Was death to it death? Was resurrection to it resurrection? Or are they all but phantasms, as the Marcionites held? It is not my present object to press these erring brethren of mine into a corner. I would rather lead them out of their schismatical fastness into the open field of wholesome and pleasant discourse; but if I were inclined, I could show that they are plunged into the Marcionite heresy, which the Catholic Church hath ever abhorred, and which our Church condemns by name. Marcion held that Christ's was not a true body; and therefore it is asserted in our Catechism that He took a true body. Now what is meant by the word true, when applied to the body, but that in all its properties it was as ours is, not failing one? And how then say they changed in the generation; yea, so changed as to be entirely of different properties, having no proclivity to temptation? If temptation bounded from him like a ball from an adamantine rock, his body is as different from ours as the rock of adamant is from the soft and yielding clay. And so an untrue body, which is the essence of the Marcionite heresy, is maintained. But is it sinful to be tempted through the flesh? If it be, then Christ must not be liable to temptation through the flesh, for He is sinless. But if it be sinful to be tempted through the flesh, how can there be such a thing as holiness at all brought out of man? For every man is tempted through the flesh, at all times, and in all ways. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. But I deny that it is unholiness to be tempted through the flesh, or by the flesh to be tempted through the mind, provided the will yield not to the evil suggestion, provided the will consent not to the evil consciousness. On the other hand, I assert that it is a condition to all holiness to be thus tempted. Holiness since the fall there has been none, but through such temptation; and holiness consisteth in being assailed by such temptation of the flesh or of the mind, in being conscious to it, and overcoming it. How any man dareth, in the face of God's Word, to say that Christ was not in all points tempted like as we are, is beyond my comprehension. And the boldness is only increased by making the words "without sin" to limit the scope and extent of the temptation; which words

contain the great truth, that though tempted always He was sinless always, by overcoming the temptation, and carrying His Divine power into the field of the temptation, and casting the tempter out; so that when in the end of his career the devil came to Him, he found nothing of his in Him, no root of bitterness, no right of possession, no sign of subjection. And this word "without sin," introduced also into the Catechism and the Confession of Faith, when treating of our Lord's generation, in order to guard against the communication of guilt, whereof ordinary generation is the sign, these misguided men would seize upon to prop up their wretched soul-destroying error, that Christ's flesh underwent in His generation a change which made it impassive to temptation, or at least not passive as ours is: the end of which vile and abominable fiction is to separate Him from all sympathy with us, and us from all sympathy with Him, and to make His mortality an arbitrary appointment of God, and no obedience of the word of His holiness pronounced upon mankind. If an innocent angel or archangel can die for any end whatever, then the distinction between good and evil, between righteousness and iniquity, is subverted for ever, and man's estate since the fall is no proof of God's holiness whatever, but a mere arbitrament of His will. Ah, it is a fearful siege which is at present carrying on against the very citadel of God's own holy being, and man's free inheritance in His grace; and we, who should have been as one man to defend God's holy being, and our own goodly inheritance in His grace, are like the sons of Ephraim drunken, but not with strong drink,—drunken with delusion and the cup of error. I could weep and bow myself down in fasting and mourning, because of the things which I hear, and which I partly see, with respect to the opinions entertained by some of the more ostensible and conspicuous of the clergy of my mother Church. I hope it is otherwise with the quiet and unobserved parish ministers. If not, I trust, O God, Thou wilt bless these labours of Thy servant, to stand in this breach and defend Thy truth. Give me a confidence in the truth which shall not be afraid even of a brother's wrath, even of a mother's punishment. The time is short; the issues are a nation's, and a Church's preservation: therefore, O ye who know the truth, be up and doing; quit you like men, be strong.

Referring, for further argument upon this great subject of Christ's mortality, to our second lecture (pp. 102–107,) I observe, in improvement, what strengthening and encouragement to human nature, to the Church, and to the angels of the Church, there is in this great truth, "He became dead, and lived." The subject is Christ, in

whom is contained creation's utmost perfection, creation's eternal life. This One, the Life, and the Prince of it, became dead, came into the last and lowest condition of a creature, the dissolution of its being; and there He lay a buried body, a soul in hades. For a buried body is not death; but a buried body and an imprisoned soul, that is death, and this Christ became. Now, let us fix our contemplation upon the Lord of glory in the condition of a dead man. What meaneth it? What awful truth revealeth it? This, first of all, That he loved man with a desperate love. Thus to resign the bosom of God for the cold, chill bosom of the grave, the power and sceptre of the universe, for the prison house of the separate soul. Well might it be said in that chapter of the Proverbs so oft referred to, of Him who thus surrendered all for us, "Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men," (Prov. viii. 30, 31.) Ah! what a brotherhood is in this! Ah! what a cleaving, knitting love! Herein indeed is love, that He who is God should follow man down into the shades of the grave. Oh! my soul, doubt no more; no more despair. He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to the death for thee, will surely with Him freely give thee all things. But this is not all: there is a yet higher truth than this revealed in the death of Christ. The truth of God's moral being; the truth of what sin is; the truth of what the law of God against sin is,—how terrible, how unalterable. Man transgresses the commandment of God, and mankind dies for that one transgression: and flat sunk into the bowels of the earth, falls prostrate the glory of mankind. How fearful! But how very much more fearful, that a person who is God, creation's fountain word, creation's life, should, for that one transgression of man, likewise die. My faculties are absorbed in the thought, my mind reels again under the weight of such a thought. Then indeed, O God! thou art "glorious in thy holiness, fearful in thy praises, and doing wonders;" awful in the sanctity of God, awful in the nature of sin! O God, let the impression which these words feebly utter, dwell upon my soul for ever, and upon the souls of all who shall read these words.—Furthermore, the perfect unity of mankind in condition before God was taught by Christ's becoming dead. If His different personality from Adam did not give Him escape from Adam's sentence, how should ours give us any escape? Time and place maketh no difference: we all sinned in Him, and fell with Him; we all were created with Him holy in the image and likeness of God, with dominion over ourselves and the creatures; and for this estate,

God holdeth every one of us answerable, and because of our fall from thence the wrath of God abideth on us. I do not say, that Christ sinned in him and fell with him, because Christ existed before him, and existed beside him, and had no part whatever in him as a creature, other than right over him as Creator. But I say, that Christ's coming into our nature and becoming partaker of our curse thereby, well proveth what a unit mankind is, in the sight of God; and what a rending schism it will be, when a part is torn away, and cast into the lake of the second death. Such a schism to prevent, God hath laboured diligently in the gift of His Son, a ransom for all, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.—There is yet another thing which is seen in Christ's becoming dead, How small a thing creation is, compared with the moral being of God; how transient its beauty, how ineffectual its stupendous power, how weak and effete its mightiest action, how idle its state, how contemptible its glory, when set beside one single and solitary acting of the moral principle in God; for in Christ's death was seen the death of creation: it was as if all motion had come to rest, and all form had returned to chaos again, and all light been swallowed up of darkness, and all life returned back into the womb of nothingness; for He died, whose life quickened the chaos, and formed the earth, and spread the heavens abroad. He died whose word said, Be light, and light was; and this, and all this quenching of creation's light and life came to pass, because man had transgressed one commandment of God. Oh! how the moral is by this exalted above the physical! oh! how righteousness shineth over power, how God is glorified above God's work!

Besides these and other great lessons taught us by the death of Christ, (for further information upon which we may refer to Lecture II. pp. 152–155,) there are other lessons taught by His living again out of death! "He became dead, and lived;" or rather I should say, the half only of every lesson is taught by His death, and the other half by His resurrection out of death. His death, of itself apart, would have taught this erroneous lesson, and this only, That sin had somehow or other lodged itself in Godhead also; and that God himself had been mastered by the potentate of death, which is the devil. Had Christ only died, God's subjection to sin would have been proved, and creation's misery and thraldom for ever sealed; the guilt of the guilty made irrevocable, grace and mercy made impossible. So needful is resurrection to the subsistence of hope in the breast of man, and to the proclamation of good news from the throne of God. These consequences, which are inevitable, if Christ rose not, come with equal force, though not with such strong appearance, if it be said, that the body which died and rose, and the soul which

descended into hell, (the place of separate spirits,) and brought thence the keys of hell and death, were a different body and soul in any respect whatsoever, from those which mankind in common possess. For upon every principle of sound reason, and by an invariable rule of logic, if in any number of individuals there be one, who, in one respect only, differs from all the rest, and he have a different action or passion from all the rest, that action or passion must, and ever is and will be, ascribed to the influence of this his particular and distinguishing property: so, if Christ's body and soul have any distinction of natural being, from bodies and souls in general, to that distinction must, in reason and logic, be ascribed the peculiar specific phenomenon of His resurrection. If the Spirit changed His body in its conception, then to that extraordinary work of the Spirit is necessarily to be ascribed the extraordinary effect of His resurrection from the dead; and we who have had no such extraordinary generation, can on such a wretched (but prevailing, as I understand,) hypothesis have no resurrection, and creation is as dark of hope as if Christ had not risen. Oh! to what man's unbelief or partial belief doth drive them in the hidings of God's countenance, and the withholding of his prevenient grace! If again it be held that Christ arose with a different body, NUMERICALLY different, (that is, which can be numbered as another,) from that which was laid in the grave, the same fatal conclusions necessarily follow; for in that case, it is not redemption of the created thing, but the creation of another thing; and resurrection is by the annihilation of the old thing created, and by the creation of a different thing. Creation is defeated, and the Creator is defeated. He tried his hand the first time and failed; but the second time he succeeded: false, fatal conclusion, changing God, deifying the devil! And this conclusion cometh as necessarily from supposing a change of the virgin's substance in the womb, as a change of the Lord's substance in the grave; I mean, change into another, numerically another, so as that it may be said of Christ's body, This is of another substance from mine. There is no point on which the Church laboured so long and so successfully to establish as this, That Christ took His human nature of the substance of the virgin, in the same sense in which He took His Divine nature of the substance of the Godhead: and in all the Creeds of the Catholic Church, and in all the Confessions of the same Church, after it had protested against the Roman Apostasy, this point is most carefully and scrupulously worded. Nor had I supposed that it would have ever come into doubt in any branch of the Catholic Church. At this moment, however, I perceive a strong temptation of the devil to work upon what is called the Evangelical party, to deny this great

head of faith, and to enunciate something contrary to it; as, that He took substance of Adam before He fell, or that He took it in a different state from what it is in one of us. As to what an individual, or any two or three individuals, may say, it is of little comparative consequence; but if any Church, by word or deed, should sanction error here, that Church doth prove itself not to be upon the foundation; which foundation is not, that there is a Christ, but that Jesus is the Christ; that He who was of the virgin's substance is the Christ. How one of fallen sinful substance could become the holy Christ of God; or, to speak more accurately, how the Christ of God could, without sin, take up unto himself a sinful substance, and preserve it ever sinless; is another question which must be gone into and made good, otherwise all is lost: but that it was the sinful substance which He took, and, taking, preserved holy throughout all its ills and temptations, tendencies, propensities, and inclinations; all the hidings of God's countenance, and smitings of God's wrath, sufferings, sorrows, death, and corruption, and everything else to which such a substance is liable, and must ever encounter;—this is the root of the matter, the elements of the problem, the nodus of the question, without which there is neither question, problem, nor matter of reality in the Incarnation. Of denying this, of doubting this, O my brother! whoever thou art, be thou ware, be thou awfully aware. For, thus denied, Christ in His nature hath no union with thy nature; there is an element in every one of thy temptations which is not in His; His victory over any temptation is no assurance of thine; He cannot be thy High Priest, for He hath not fellowship with thee in thy trials; which is laid down by the apostle (Heb. v.) as the very condition to any one's being a high priest. In thy sinful actions, truly, He hath not sympathy as having so acted, for His actions were always sinless and holy: but even here, though He hath it not by real impartation, He hath it by imputation; for all along, and in all respects, He was treated as a sinner by the Father, He was made sin, He was made a curse: and so here also He can sympathise with us: although sinner He was not, yet as sinner was He treated, and herein standeth the vicariousness of His work: in the other standeth the real personality of it. But of this last there is no dispute amongst us. Luther made it good against the Romanists. Must some second Luther make the other good against the Evangelical? I hope not, I pray not.

The erroneousness of all opinions which make a difference between Christ's body born and ours born, or Christ's body risen and His body interred, consisteth in this, that whatsoever was done in Him and for Him by Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, hath

no necessary connexion with us; proves no love, grace, or holiness of God towards us; holds forth no redemption, salvation, resurrection, nor glory for us, but only for one who had an essential difference from us; not an accidental but an essential difference, a difference of God's own making, and which God did first make before He set His love upon Him or would have any communion with Him. This proves that He cannot set His love on us as we now are; that He cannot have communion with us, nor any grace towards us, nor any compassion of us. Christ's incarnation becomes thereby the seal of our condemnation, instead of being the gospel of God's forgiveness. And for our souls, there can be no hope in God until they shall have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, as Christ's soul became regenerated; and then the question is, what should move God to regenerate any soul? hatred cannot, wrath cannot: love only can; but then there is no love to move Him to it. And as for the resurrection of the body, it becomes a mere figment and falsehood upon this scheme which they are blazing forth, to destroy the Church withal; for Christ's body to be beloved of God, and holpen with Godhead power, had first to be changed by extraordinary generation, which ours cannot be, and therefore must it be hated, and have no hope of Godhead power. And so resurrection is the property only of a body changed by extraordinary generation, and therefore is no property of ours, and so man's hope lies flat. Where is your boasted metaphysics, your intellectual acumen, O ye Scottish divines, that ye cannot see these fell conclusions with which ye would sweep out the stars of heaven?

But,—to forsake the region of controversy, and keep to our proper vocation of an interpreter of God's most holy Word,—seeing that Christ, having come into the condition of a dead man, did revive and live for ever; these great points of doctrine are established, first, that Godhead did not exhaust itself when it said, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," but that beyond this depth there was yet a greater depth in the good pleasure of God. The first depth was this, That one transgression should erase creation's life: the second depth was this, That God's grace should raise creation's life from the grave again. The first depth was this, That to sin against God, is more than the life of creation is worth: the second depth was this, That with God there is forgiveness, and plenteous redemption, that He may be sought after. The one is not the contradiction of the other, but the establishment of the other: as it is written in the 85th Psalm, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh

them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." The opening of the fountain of life in the grace of God, to a perished creation lying prostrate in death, was the first great fruit of the resurrection. The creature-nature of Christ lay in death; the body in the grave, the soul in hell. The Godhead power of Him carried off the gates of hell and the grave, and brought forth thence not only himself but many of the saints; and it is one of His prerogatives to have the keys of hell and death, and to open them when He pleaseth. All, therefore, of disgrace, misery, penalty, curse, or by whatever name you may call it, Christ hath destroyed devil and all. He hath led captivity captive, and ascended up on high: He hath brought life and immortality to light by His death and resurrection. This is the first great truth taught by Christ's resurrection, That creation dead and buried for its sin, is, by God's free act in His Son, risen and glorified through regeneration of the Holy Ghost. There is brought in, through regeneration, as unbounded a hope to creation, as was brought in an unbounded hopelessness by sin. They who would limit to a portion of mankind the profit of Christ's resurrection, do not understand election, quite another mystery from redemption, which is the prerogative of another person of the Godhead; nor do they understand redemption; nor do they understand the nature of original sin, nor any other of the great heads of Christian doctrine. Particular redemption is a misnomer for particular election; or if it be held not to be a misnomer, then I hold it to be a schismatical doctrine, that is, expressing only a part of the truth. Universal propositions, such as these, "The Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world;" "The propitiation, not for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world; "A ransom for all;" "The Saviour of all men," &c., can only be set aside by universal negatives, and are only confirmed by particular affirmatives; such as, "I give my life for the sheep," "The Church which He hath purchased with His own blood." And that the redemption should be affirmed of, particularly as well as universally, is derived from the higher mystery of election, which taketh out of the redeemed whom God the Father pleaseth to take. For redemption, though it be truly a gift of God, whose reality as a gift dependeth nowise upon our receiving or not receiving it, doth demonstrate to the full the alienation and rebellion of mankind, who will not have life, but prefer to abide in death, who will not

have God's grace, but prefer to abide in His wrath, will not be charmed by the Divine charmer, charm He never so sweetly. The great Prophet of creation, our Orpheus, master of the heavenly song, hath in love for his wife descended to her prison, and brought her up: but back looking she preferreth to abide there; and another, though yet not another, but another in person though the same in substance, even the Father, the Godhead unsearchable, must have the honour and be worshipped, as giving that which delivereth man from the power, the fatal power of a rebellious will. This is the second lesson taught in Christ's dying and living again; namely,—

The willingness of the unchangeable Godhead to redeem every creature from the power of death. For Christ, who is Godhead in its comprehensible form, Godhead within the scope of creature-limits, having taken flesh, is enabled to do good and to be good therein, by faith exercised upon the Father; while the Father serveth Godhead power to the person of His labouring Son, and the Son useth it in His mortal members, to take them out of temptation's hold. And the same Son from the depths of hell (hades) doth uplift His faith, and is served there with Godhead power, acting as Godhead properly acteth by three persons, which He the Son useth to take His body from the grave; and thus Godhead's willingness, the Father's willingness to subsist and to advance and to glorify fallen men, is put for ever beyond a question. It is not Christ's love merely which is demonstrated, for that form of being when embodied prevailed not of itself to do the work; but it is Godhead's, absolute Godhead's love, the Father's love, which is revealed unto human nature, in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The good will of the electing God hath thus appeared. It appeared first in Christ, His elected one, and it ought to be preached in Him to all men; and not to preach it to all men is not to preach election, whereof the essence is in this,—not that it applies only to a part, but that it applies only to as many as will believe in God, and put their trust upon Him. Election is the continual assertion of man's inability of himself to join himself to Christ, and of God's willingness and ability to do that same thing. I therefore set down these as the great truths taught by Christ's dying and reviving; first, that there is in Him life to all mankind; and next, that there is in God the will and the power to make that life the property of all men; so that he who possesseth it not doth not possess it through disbelief of that which God proclaimeth to all the world.

The more particular application of this style, which the Universal Bishop chooses to adopt towards the angel of the Church of Smyrna, will appear under the head of the charge to which we now proceed.

OUR BISHOP'S SECOND CHARGE.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, *but thou art rich.*" I know not what tenderness of spirit I am continually overpowered with, ever as I read and comment upon the words which the Lord of glory useth from the throne of heaven to his poor ministers abiding in this vale of tears, and travailing with much carefulness in the cure of souls. There is such human heartedness, such simplicity, such sympathy, and such minute and delicate consideration of our case, that I can hardly figure it to be spoken by God, but am ever tempted to think I hear the voice of some co-presbyter encouraging me in my labour. This also is my infirmity; for much and zealously as I have argued for the truth and verity of Christ's manhood, I also feel the temptation of this day, which, in the orthodox Church, is to think of Him as God only, and not as God consenting ever to act by man's instruments, and in man's limitations. Much need I to learn the lesson for the teaching of which I have suffered reproach, that Christ in heaven, seated on heaven's throne and worshipped of heaven's host, is nowise changed from the Son of man who washed the feet of His disciples and wept at the tomb of His friend. Let me lay to heart that passage which I have so often quoted, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." From the era in eternity before all measured time, when He chose, or when the Godhead chose that form of being under which all intelligence should rank as its largest orb, Reason was that favoured form in which the Christ subsisted, and doth subsist, and shall for ever subsist, creation's Head, creation's Lord, creation's Light, creation's Word. Now reason is man's community, and of every reasonable thought and act man is a partaker. And there is a oneness between Christ and man, as between parent and child; and there is a delight in Christ with man, as the delight of a parent with his child. So that we may not marvel that His words are so appropriate to human wants, that His consolations are so welcome to man's conditions. The wonder were that they should be otherwise; yea, it is impossible that otherwise they should be. Truly revelation is reason perfect and complete: because revelation is Christ portrayed, and Christ is the Logos, the Reason, the Light of life, of whose fulness we have all received. Now, O my heart, be enlarged, while I change the theme of my discourse, and pass from contemplating the depth and compass of that name, "The first and the last, which became dead and lived," to feel and express the pathetic tenderness of this charge of my Great Bishop to the angel of the Church of Smyrna. He begins as usual with expressing His knowledge of his

works, to intimate that he did not serve an indifferent or inobservant master, but such a one as did well notice, carefully remember, generously acknowledge, and plentifully reward, every act of His faithful minister, according to His own word,—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these little ones, ye have done it also unto me." These words, "I know thy works," are not spoken in the spirit of an inquisitor, or spy, or corrector, but in the spirit of the good Shepherd, who knoweth His sheep by name, and giveth heed to every sheep of every flock of His servants: words they are not expressive merely of the attribute of omniscience, but of the higher attribute, the moral attribute of watchfulness and carefulness over those chosen ones of His Father; as it is written, (John xvii. 12,) "Those that thou gavest me I have kept; and none of them is lost." And again, (John x. 27, 28,) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Nevertheless, though these words be spoken in a loving and most charitable mood, they are not on that account the less, but the more powerful rebuke of our ignorance, our ignorance of our flocks, our indifference to their estate, our unfaithfulness to their conditions. Oh, no! these words, "I know thy works," do thrill through my heart with a power which no threatening nor rebuke could have. And, woe is me, what a fearful, dreadful note of future reckoning do they bear unto the pastors of the churches. Not to cast any one into despair, nor to annihilate the energies of any, but to call every one to meditate his responsibility before Christ, as a steward in His house, to humble us under the sense of our shortcomings, and to move us unto repentance and reformation of our lives. While these words sound in the ear of the indolent and careless feeders of the sheep, how do they comfort and sustain the faithful and oppressed ones, who in poverty and persecution, in reproach and contempt, are pursuing the shepherd's care! While to you, O ye idle shepherds, who seek your ease in rural retreats, or in populous cities pursue your pleasures, spending the produce of your flocks in vain and wicked pomp, or with lettered pride and elegance, entertaining your selfish minds, it speaks,—while to you, O ye home-sick shepherds, who will not leave your comfortable quarters, and venture out in the dark and stormy nights to preserve your flocks from the drifting tempest, but please yourselves with the security and the quiet, and the worldly reputation for prudence which ye enjoy;—these words, "I know your works," do ring a knell like the summons of the judgment, and certainly to be followed by dreadful judgment, if ye rise not, O ye self-seeking sluggards, and gird yourselves, and take

your scrip and your sheep-hook, and go forth to seek the sheep in the dark wintry night upon the mountains; these same words do breathe balm of consolation over the heart of every faithful servant who seeketh not his own but his Master's honour, who careth not for himself but for his Master's trust, who foregoeth his own ease, wealth, and glory, that he may devote himself to the Church of God, and give his all, yea, and his very life, for the sheep: such an one, for example, as Paul declareth himself to have been, (Acts xx. 18–21, 26, 27, 31:) "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." . . . . Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. . . . Therefore watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Such a one also as he exhorteth Timothy to be, (1 Tim. vi. 11, 12, 20, 21,) "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. . . . . O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen."

"I know thy tribulation." Tribulation hath reference chiefly, or almost entirely, to outward persecution of one sort or another in the Church, from false brethren, or schismatical spirits; out of the Church from wicked and violent men of the world, from heretical and sectarian leaders, or from apostates from the faith. These Achans within the camp, these Korahs, these persons like Ananias, Simon Magus, Alexander the coppersmith, and others mentioned in the Scriptures, do us much evil, and occasion the faithful minister much trouble. But he must not be amazed as if God had forsaken him, or some strange thing befallen him. Not only to the minister is it said, but to every Christian, "he that would live godly must suffer persecution;" and again, "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom." But that ministers of the gospel and pastors of the Church have especially to expect these hardships, and

are expected to bear them like good soldiers, yea, like hardy captains of the Lord Jesus Christ, is abundantly declared by the chief Shepherd, the great Captain of our salvation, when first He sent out into the world, our great progenitors, the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples. As it is written at large in Matt. x. 16–24; and the other gospels, from which let me quote the following passage, which gives us honourable preferment in this bloody strife:—"Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."—Upon the last words of this extract from our missionary instructions, I have a remark to make, both for the sake of my brethren in the ministry, and for the sake of the truth. These words, which have been so much abused of late to prop up the system of money-missions, signify simply that this commission was to endure even until the coming of the Son of man, in His kingdom, which is not yet; and so takes the whole passage out of the destroying teeth of those falsely called missionary societies,—their proper name is colonising societies,—which have done their endeavour to give this whole discourse a local and temporary application to that first missionary expedition which Christ set on foot, in the days of His flesh. Which dilapidation and destruction of the eternal word, these worse than Papists, for the Papists did but add to the Word, and took not from it, do justify upon the ground of our Lord's saying, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." This, with the reckless haste of unbelief (he that believeth doth not make haste,) they interpret as necessarily confining the whole context to that first journey, which was restricted to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But, without entering into the sophisms, the false principles of interpretation, and the most daring violations of the Word of God, with which they prop up their poor inventions

for converting the world, I will take the plea altogether out of their mouths, by referring them to the margin of our Bibles, which is, "Ye shall not end, or finish, or be done with, the cities of Israel, until the Son of man be come." In the context He had been instructing them, when persecuted in one city, to flee into another; not to be prodigal of their lives, not to seek persecution, not to brave it, no, nor even to wait for its ultimate consummation, but to hasten and flee to another city, and so to circulate the truth of the gospel; and lest they should think that by such removals they would be too early finished with their work, He tells them that they should not have finished even with the cities of Israel till He should come; that it should prove a more untoward work to evangelise men than they thought—a long, a wearisome, a laborious work; He mentions the cities of Israel, because as yet the gospel was published only to them. And, accordingly, behold how true it hath come to pass, even with these. They are not yet evangelised; and when He shall come, we know that "He shall come as a refiner of the sons of Levi," "to purge out the rebels:" and though His coming shall be in grace to them, yet it shall be also in mourning and bitterest repentance, "like the mourning of Hadadrimmon." Which issue well knowing, He said to the twelve, "Go, hasten, tarry not, for there is plenty of work on hand. Cast not away your lives rashly, bestow not your labour unprofitably, for great is the work ye have to do, and when I come to inspect it, I shall find much undone." These instructions being largely applied to the successors of the apostles, the regularly-ordained ministers of the word, do convey this truth, that we should not seek persecution, nor brave it, nor wait its issues of death, but hasten and flee away to other habitations of men, and plant, and sow, and water amongst them; for there will always be enough to do on the earth amongst the cities of the nations, even up to the very day of the coming of the Son of man, concerning which it is spoken despairingly, (Luke xviii.,) "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth?" While therefore a minister of the gospel, an angel of the Church, may assuredly expect tribulation, and ought to bear it patiently, he is not called upon to pursue an endless ungrateful labour, nor to cast himself in the way of rude conflict and perils of his life. It is true that the Apostle Paul did go up unto Jerusalem, though the Spirit testified that bonds and imprisonment awaited him; but then Paul had the testimony of the Spirit that he should go up. The time comes without our seeking it, when God will call on us to seal our testimony with our blood; that time found almost all the apostles, and apostolical men, and this angel of the Church of Smyrna, if, as seems

most probable he was, the venerable Polycarpus, concerning whose martyrdom we have shown above.

These cautions and instructions of the Lord are not, however, for the encouragement of a timorous or cowardly disposition; for in the same discourse He saith, "he that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it;" but they are for preventing rashness and resoluteness, the spirit of contradiction and foolhardiness, and wanton bravery, which are not fruits of the Spirit, but fruits of the flesh, and which, when a minister hath well brought under, and doth carefully eschew, he shall still find tribulation and persecution enough to try weak humanity, to prove its weakness, while at the same time it proves the incorruptible and invincible strength of that grace which is sufficient for us, and that strength which is perfected in weakness. O ye ministers of Christ, and angels of the churches, who, in the fulfilment of your office, are now enduring grief and vexation of spirit from the peccant and malignant humours which flow in the veins of the Church, from the unfriendly, ignorant, and oppressive spirit which is beginning to manifest itself in the governors of the State, know, and be assured, that the eye of heaven looketh down upon your condition, and that the approval of heaven smiles upon your patience, and that the light of God's countenance shines upon the narrow path of life in which you walk. Remember, O my brethren in contumely and contempt, in opprobrium and false accusations, ye objects of the revilings of the wicked, the envenomed shafts of false churchmen and schismatical sectarians! remember who they were that were sealed in the destruction of Jerusalem, whose lives were preserved in that wreck and ruin of an apostate Church. Is it not written in the Book of Ezekiel the Prophet, in these words: "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof," (ix. 4.) Remember, O my brethren, who are standing for the ordinances and doctrines of the Church, against the disciples of human intellect and expediency and worldly wisdom; who are standing for the hope of the day of the Lord, and witnessing against the wickedness in the Church and in the State, and for such testimony are enduring that tribulation which is the beginning of sorrows; oh remember who they are that are remembered in that day of decision, and spared in that day of destruction. Is it not written in the Book of Malachi the Prophet, "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we

have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," (iii. 13–18.) Therefore, O ye ministers who know the Lord, "be strong and do exploits." Be not afraid of their terror, neither be ashamed with any amazement. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show the Lord's people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin." The day of trial is at hand. Be not like the men of Ephraim, bearing bows, who turned back in the day of battle. If they trouble you, the Lord will sustain you in six troubles, and in seven He will not forsake you. If they afflict you, then in all your afflictions He is afflicted, and the Angel of His covenant shall preserve you. Speak the truth, and the truth which ye speak will save your own souls, and them also who hear you. I see a day of tribulation darkening, it is near for to come; the day of the Lord, dreadful and terrible, like darkness spread upon the mountain. And the shepherds shall be smitten, and the flock shall be scattered; but, "fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Yet have I a hope, yea, and I have a faith* that the end shall be glorious even in the sight of our enemies, that the time for treading down the saints is accomplished, and the time of treading down the enemies of the saints is arrived. We shall not any more be given into their hands like sheep for the slaughter, but we shall be delivered out of the great tribulation, and our days prolonged to many generations: yea, for ever and ever. Yet not until we shall have been proved with trials, more trying than imprisonment and death: trials which would deceive the very elect; miracles and signs; all the seductions of intellectual beauty, all the inventions of human wisdom, and all the accomplishments of human speech, shall entangle us like a net, and engird us like a girdle. It is already begun, mockery from the worldlings; pity from the body of the Church, as lost and misguided men; cunning snares of Satan, to take us in our own peculiar beliefs, concerning the advent and kingdom of Christ; false charges of heresy from the guardians of the Church's faith; inquisitorial *espionage* of our liberty in Christ, from false brethren, crept in

* For the grounds of this faith, see Lect. II. pp. 135, 136.

unawares to spy out our liberty in Christ; liers in wait to catch us in our words, and to condemn us for a word; base misrepresentations by church-swollen men, heresy finders, who, in our Scotland, have taken up the old craft of the witch-finder;—these forms of wickedness, these confederacies of wicked men, are now raging on every side around that little company, who have been bold enough to challenge the Church's poverty of faith, and to arouse the Church's carnal security. It is already a day of tribulation to those that know the Lord, and that think upon His name. Well! glory in it, ye angels of the churches, who are called upon to endure it. Seek it not, strive not after it; for the man of God must not strive, but be patient towards all men. Seek not after it; yet, like the three children, care not for it; but remember the word of the Lord, which He spake, and oft, oft repeated in one form or other,—"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," (Matt. v. 11, 12.) And though no eye shall see, and no ear should hear, and no heart should pity, remember, oh! remember the great Overseer, the one Shepherd and Watchman of Israel, who said unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna, and to all in likewise tempted, "I know thy works, I know thy tribulation."

"I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." This also, like the rest, I understand in a literal sense, as signifying the absence of riches, and even of honourable and becoming state, the presence of poverty, bare and needy poverty: for, if the contrary condition of the Church of Laodicea, related iii. 17, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," be, as it must be, taken literally, then must the poverty of the angel of the Church of Laodicea be also so taken. Indeed, I have not as yet seen any reason to interpret otherwise than literally any part of these epistles; and it is a fixed canon of all interpretation of words that the literal sense should ever be preferred, and the figurative, or allegorical, or symbolical, never be adopted unless the literal manifestly will not serve, or unless there be given some intimation of another sense. Besides, there would be no force nor beauty in the parenthetic clause, "but thou art rich," unless we should understand the poverty to be literal poverty. And being so understood, the spiritual riches of the poor minister of Smyrna stood in sublime contrast with his temporal poverty, answering to that beautiful instruction of our Lord, Matt. vi. 19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for

yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Answering also to these beautiful contrasts of the apostle, "As poor, yet making many rich!" "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" We make no doubt, therefore, that the Angel of the Church of Smyrna was distinguished for his poverty among the seven selected churches, as he was to be yet more distinguished for his tribulations; and thus by degrees, we begin to gather together the elemental idea of this epistle, ver. 7, that it is written to set forth, both by instance and by general doctrine, the example of a Church outwardly beset with every form of affliction and want; yet, through faith in Him who is the first and the last, was dead and is alive, prevailing unto this day against all outward accumulations of adversity; for the encouragement of all churches, and for the demonstration of the triumphs of faith, over the wildest and cruelest oppositions and persecutions of the world. Poverty then is no sign of God's disfavour to a Church any more than persecution; nor is it any sign of a Church's weakness, but contrariwise of a Church's prosperity, so that they be rich in faith towards God. For, behold, in these seven cardinal instances, there are two,—the one distinguished for its poverty, the other for its abundance, whereof the former is blessed with all consolations, the latter treated with indignant threatenings by the Lord; whereof the former still subsisteth in strength and honour, the latter is lost both to memory and to sight.

Some, looking to this distinction, have rashly concluded, that therefore a Church should be established in poverty, and it hath passed into a maxim in the North, that a poor Church is a pure Church; and that the Church of Scotland is founded upon the rock of poverty. God forbid that she should not be founded upon some better foundation than this! No: such reasoners abuse and wrest the Scriptures, which commend not poverty as a blessing or a good, but comfort those that are under it, as being in a trial, which through their faith will redound unto honour and glory in the day of the Lord. Godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come, and the Psalmist boasteth in God, "I have been young and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." That maxim which has got into the mouths of certain puritanical or churlish men, savours more of the mendicant orders of the Papacy, or the sacrilegious spoliation of the nobles which went on at the time of the Reformation, especially in Scotland; than it doth of any reverence for the Church, or enlightened view of

her prosperity. The true doctrine concerning the outward estate of a minister is given by our Lord in the code of instructions, which we have already referred to, in these words, (Luke x. 7, 8:) "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you." This evangelical canon is that upon which the apostles went; or if at a time they departed from it, as did Paul and Barnabas, it was with the reservation of the right when they pleased to resume it; as may be seen set forth at large in the 9th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians; and by this canon every Church and every minister ought to regulate himself. And what is the spirit of the canon? Not obligation to any particular condition of life, as poverty; nor preference of one to another, but indifference to all; a willingness to abound, a willingness to want, a willingness to be in riches, a willingness to be in poverty. This is the noble dignity, this is the royal liberty of the minister's calling, to sit and feast with the king in his palace, to sit and fare with the king's poorest subject in his cottage, and to be as much at home with the one as with the other. Oh, it is a poor, crude, yea, and wicked view of our office, to say that we should be kept poor; as if upon being entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we might not be entrusted with any portion of this world's goods. I do admire, while I perfectly penetrate that good-natured care of us incompetent ministers, which moves so many of our liberal statesmen to argue that there should be no livings in the Church above such and such a value, and none below such and such a value. The laity indeed may be trusted with untold wealth; a citizen with a plum of money, a noble with the lands of a county, and the revenues of a king; but a clergyman is not so to be entrusted, and must be put under the tutelage of our most parsimonious and economical exchequer. The Church lands, which the piety of our fathers devoted unto the necessities of the Church, must be taken under the management of the Lords of the Treasury, who have managed their concerns so well as to involve their country in many hundred millions of debt. God forgive me if I speak lightly or irreverently, but my heart is embittered with the clamours which I hear from all men, concerning the trustlessness of the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels and ministers of the churches; who, let me say it, though there be shameful exceptions, live poorer and die poorer than any other class of the community above the rank of a day-labourer. Ignoble age! ungenerous children of generous fathers! where now is your liberality to the Church of the living God? Methinks ye are preparing for

another such abominable sacrilege as heretofore was transacted in these lands at the Reformation. O ye nobles of Scotland, who left the Church in beggary, tell if ye be at this day the richer for all the plunder which ye made of your mother's estates? Are you at this day the less encumbered with mortgages, that ye did encumber the Reformers and first preachers of Scotland with want, bare want and miserable poverty? And yet behold, O Church of Scotland, how the poverty of thy Reformers and thy ministers was not able to embarrass or prevent thy prosperity, but did rather bind thee round the neck of thy people, and write thy worthiness upon the tables of their hearts. Though thou wast sore hampered in thy purposes of good for the realm of Scotland by the avarice and the sacrilege of the nobles, thou wast only the more endeared to the body of the nation, who witnessed thy labours for their salvation, in the midst of poverty and nakedness. And when the day came of thy sore tribulation, and thy covetous nobles turned away their face from thee, thou foundest in the devotedness of the people that arm of strength which set thee in thine honourable place: the poorest and the most efficient, the worst rewarded and most laborious of all the Christian Churches. But be not vain of thy poverty, or churlish towards thy sister's grandeur. Join not those sons of Belial, who under the name of reforming the Church, would meddle with her sacred treasures, ruin themselves, and, if they could, ruin her. The office of the deacon, and the charge of the deacon, and the goods of the Church which are under his administration, dare as little be intermeddled with, as the higher trust of the elder. In these things no king, no parliament, no, nor people, may interfere. The talents committed to the minister, the trusts committed to the elder, the goods committed to the deacon, are all alike and equally put beyond the power of any civil interference. I do not go aside to dilate on these things; but, perceiving the gathering storm, I would do my part to warn the Church and the nation, and to deliver my own soul. They say afflictions never come single; and I foresee that if this infidel or liberal principle get the upper hand in the administration of the State, it will to a certainty bring forth the spiritual and the temporal estate of the Church under its cruel hands. It was so in the Primitive Church, that all-tolerant Rome did ever, when it persecuted the faith, plunder also the goods of the exclusive and intolerant Christian. I say exclusive and intolerant, in the contrary sense in which Paganism was, and our present infidelity is, liberal and tolerant. The spirit of Pagan Rome, and of liberal Europe at this day, is to put no difference so far as this world is concerned, yea, and if they could, so far as another world is concerned, between men of any or of no creed

whatever. And a Christian, as he believeth God to be true, and tendereth his own eternal well-being, must stand up on the contrary part and affirm that this is a lie; that God, both in this world and in that which is to come, doth put the extremest difference between him who worships and obeys the name of Christ and him who doth not, or who worships or obeys any other name. These contrary spirits must come to issue, as to issue they ever came in ancient Rome, until power changed in the days of Constantine and Theodosius, from the liberal indulgence of all religions, into the exclusive patronage of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ; and when they come to issue in this case, I feel assured that the goods of the Church, over which the deacon is consecrated, will be invaded by law, even before the doctrine and discipline of the Church, over which the elder is consecrated. Nay, but what else at this present moment is that proposal for an Act of Parliament to bring in secular persons with authority to administer the collections made in our churches for the poor, which heretofore have been inviolably administered by the ministers, elders, and deacons of the churches? And, as if to make way for such secular inroads, the proper guardianship of deacons has been discontinued, notwithstanding the frequent and positive injunctions of the General Assembly. It is always so: our own unfaithfulness is the occasion of God's judgment. We despise or undervalue His ordinance, and we lose the temporal or spiritual blessing which it was intended to convey. Why are there no bequests to the poor of the parish as heretofore? Because there is no order of deacons standing in their place, whom God might honour. Why have poor-rates become necessary in Scotland? Because there is no order of deacons to take care of the poor. Political economists will laugh this to scorn; but believing churchmen, if any there be, will consider the matter. For my own part, I will walk in the ordinances of the Church, and if I fail, I shall meanwhile have secured to myself friends who will be able to receive me into everlasting habitations.

The true principle, therefore, upon which an angel of the churches should feel and act, is never to mind his outward estate, be it rich or be it poor, so long as he hath bread to eat and raiment to be clothed withal. But if he should be in want of necessary supplies for himself and his wife, or for his children, he ought then to tell the Church, whereof he is angel, that the Lord will not prosper their worldly industry, that He will disappoint their hopes and defeat their labours, until they shall have provided for the ministry of His altar. And if the people refuse to hear the Lord speaking by his lips, the Lord will speak in another way, and make himself be heard. Let not His faithful servant fear. God will not leave him desolate. His children

shall not beg their bread. I am afraid to encourage the pride of my brethren, the ministers of the Church of Scotland, for we are too high-minded already; but in proof of God's faithfulness I will speak it, that the sons, often the fatherless sons of her ministers, have attained in every city to the highest and richest preferment. So much for God's faithfulness to their fathers' and to their mothers' prayers. But let me tell the whole truth: these sons of the Scottish clergy are in general unmindful of the God of their fathers. I speak a word which I can too well verify in this the city of my habitation. But still the word of God standeth sure: "him that honoureth me I will honour." The lesson taught by this part of the Epistle to the Church in Smyrna is, that no poverty nor tribulation can bring us low, provided we be rich towards God, in faith upon Him who is the first and the last, and who includeth within Himself all the fulness, not of the Godhead only, but also of creation, whose is the silver and the gold and the treasures of the earth. The lesson taught us by this word, "I know thy proverty, but thou art rich," is, that a Church was never yet, since the world began, destroyed by its poverty, so long as its faith under the trial gave not way. Poverty is one of God's methods of proving faith; and when a Church is brought into poverty, it is a trial of her faith brought upon her not without a cause; but being upon her, a proof of God's love, and if she endure the chastisement, an assurance of her future well-being. What moveth the refiner to cast any stuff into his furnace? These two things. First, he believeth that there is pure metal in it; secondly, he seeth that the pure metal is mixed with much earthy dross, which he would separate from it. Even so when God casteth any Church or person into the furnace, it is to separate the fine gold from the pollution which defiles it. Are not the candlesticks represented to be of the purest gold, and doth not this signify saints of the most enduring faith? and how is the pure gold made to show its glory in the midst of the shining glittering counterfeits? By casting them all into the furnace. Then it is, that God's inheritance is proved to be God's own work, and worthy of God, when no combination of evil accidents, nor fire of hottest persecution can destroy it, or sully its beauty. In the letter written by the Church of Smyrna to the churches of Pontus concerning Polycarp's martyrdom, it is written that the fire could not consume him, nor harm him, and that his body shone in the midst of it, like the most refulgent gold. It was a type and a prophecy of the endurance of that Church, whereof he was the angel, which, since his time, hath been cast out of one furnace into another, yet abideth in strength unto this day. Oh that I could bring home this lesson to the angels

and the deacons of the churches! Oh that, instead of trusting to the arm of flesh, and deserting their posts, to rake and range about the country for subscriptions, bringing themselves and their offices into contempt, they would stay at home, and faithfully instil into the people what be the duties of a Christian congregation in these respects? And if the worst come to the worst, let them take serge and sackcloth for their clothing, and bread and water for their fare, and bless God and be thankful. Would God suffer long such things to be? No verily. He would soon take up the cause of His own ordinances; He would soon avenge the neglect of His own servants: and how He would do it, let the word of Haggai the prophet testify: —"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands," (i. 2–11.)

"And I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." This also I interpret literally, because it beareth, as I think, a full and sufficient interpretation in the literal sense. Paul taketh the distinction between a nominal and a real Jew in these words: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God," (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) And again, (Rom. ix. 6,) "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Our Lord, in like manner, when the Jews boasted, that they had Abraham for their father, saying, "We be Abraham's seed,"

answereth them, (John viii. 37, 38,) "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father;" hereby insinuating the truth that they were the synagogue of Satan. To this, when they answered and said, "Abraham is our father," Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham, . . . ye do the deeds of your father." Then said they unto Him, "We be not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God." Now mark the reply of Jesus, how exactly it is in unison with the text. "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it," (vers. 42–44.) Now because this mode of speaking concerning the literal Jews, is not uncommon in the Scriptures, I prefer for my part to interpret the passage before us literally of Jews in Smyrna, who were a great vexation and pest to the Christian Church there, as everywhere; of whom Paul saith, (Titus i. 10, 11,) "For there are many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision; whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." And again, (1 Thess. ii. 14–16,) "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." These passages of Scripture show us, with what fearful animosity against the Christian churches, the Jews in all places were animated. And the experiences of Paul, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, do exemplify the general accusation brought against them, in these two passages of Holy Writ. And no wonder that it should be so, when it is remembered under what notions of Messiah, the Jews of that generation were nurtured;—to believe that He would avenge them of all their enemies, that He would break the neck of the Roman powers, that He would satisfy His own people with bloodshed and victory, and give them the necks of all their

enemies to be under their feet. What a revulsion in the mind of men thus rooted and grounded in a false and cruel faith, must it have occasioned to hear the Son of a carpenter, who had been condemned as a malefactor, and with malefactors crucified, preached as the Hope of Israel; and what an indignation and wrath, to see Him believed on, as the Hope of Israel! Disappointed in their daily looking for of a deliverance, rankling under the memory of a thousand indignities, the proud Jew clung to his Messiah, and grasped the hope of Him to his heart, and waited and waited, thirsting for revenge, and assured that the day of vengeance would come. Conceive then, what a spite, what gall and wormwood, to see a slain, ignoble Nazarene gone from the face of the earth, believed in as the Christ of God; to see their children and their brethren deserting Moses, and the hope of Israel, for this Nazarene and these Galilean fishermen. Add to this, that from about the time of the apostles' beginning to spread the gospel, the Roman empire fell into such shakings and convulsions during the reigns of the emperors from Tiberius to Vespasian, as threatened its entire downfall, and as were sufficient to have brought it down, had God not needed it for His battle-axe, to hew in pieces the Jewish nation. These unheard-of cruelties, extravagancies, conspiracies, civil wars, and convulsions of every kind, by the space of more than thirty years, brought the Jews into the conviction that the fourth empire was just about to be broken for ever; and believing rightly enough that the Shepherd and Stone of Israel was to break it, they were in a frenzy for His appearing. He had come, and they knew Him not. Now they were mad that He should come, but they stretched out their hands in vain; for no deliverer was there for them, but destruction like a whirlwind. Disappointed expectations, deferred hope, such a glorious occasion unoccupied, added to the complete fulfilment of the times, brought the whole nation into a state of madness, and they snatched on every side, and every upstart Messiah they gathered unto; and they blasphemed the Christ of God; and they rose in insurrection until their very name became hateful, and that Roman revenge was engendered which at last broke them in pieces. They had received the first smitings of the Roman arm at the hand of Titus, before this vision was given: they were scattered abroad; and wherever they went they turned against the Christians; until at length the recovered polity of Rome could bear them no longer, and a war next to extermination was, about twenty years after the revelation of this book, carried on against them. In this interval or breathing time, it is not to be wondered that in two of these epistles we should find the Jews mentioned as a sore trial to the angels of the churches. And not only

in the way of bitter persecution, but likewise of controversy, did the Jews trouble the believers in Christ, maintaining that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Christ of God, the Messiah promised to the fathers. This was one of the chief controversies which the Primitive Church had to maintain, as is manifest from the writings of the fathers of the first three centuries: a controversy it was, also, of weighty arguments upon both sides: and indeed, but for the steady belief in the personal coming and personal kingdom of Christ, which in these ages prevailed, the argument could not have been maintained with the Jew; for much more of the prophecy concerning Messiah remaineth to be fulfilled, than hath been already accomplished. The Church in those days dared not to take such liberties with the prophets as now it is counted pious and faithful to do. They dared not take so much of a prophecy and say, This had a literal fulfilment in Messiah's person and work upon the earth; but for the rest, though it be written in exactly the same language and connexion, it never was meant to have a real fulfilment upon the earth. If a man had dared to reason so in these times, he would have received his proper name of an unbeliever, of an infidel, of one who by his traditions made void the Law and the Prophets. It was reserved for times like these to take such liberties with the word of God, and to sanctify the sacrilege with the names of spirituality, piety, and good sense. The Jews in those days, as always, stood stiffly for the great principle that Messiah should completely accomplish every thing which had been written of him by the Prophets. The Christians likewise maintained the same, and argued that what was still unaccomplished He would to the very letter perfect at His coming and kingdom: and I am bold enough to say unto the man who denies this principle, that he is doing dishonour both to God and to Christ; and I solemnly recall to his remembrance these words of the Lord, (Matt. v. 17–19,) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

We, the angels of the churches, have not this particular form of trial to withstand. The Jews are put under, broken, and dispirited. They trouble not us, if we will not trouble them. But there hath arisen to try us, who hold the primitive faith of Christ's advent and kingdom on the earth, a form of opposition, much of the same kind,

and of still greater strength; an argument also with brethren,—I had almost said with implacable brethren,—and an argument which, it is remarkable, hath to be maintained upon precisely the same grounds as that which fell to the share of the angel of the Church in Smyrna, and the angel of the Church in Philadelphia: I mean, the argument and the controversy which we have to urge with the multitude of the professing Church, who either are indifferent or opposed to, the glorious advent and kingdom of Christ upon the earth. These our brethren deny that Christ is to accomplish visibly upon the earth, more of the prophecies than He has accomplished. The Jews deny that those prophecies which speak of Messiah's humility, were to be fulfilled literally; they deny that those which speak of Messiah's glory are to be fulfilled literally. Put those together, and the result is, that none of the prophecies concerning Him are to be fulfilled at all; which is infidelity complete. Either the Jew is infidel or our brethren are infidel, or both. I leave them to settle it between them. For my own faith is, that every jot and tittle prophesied of Messiah as to take place upon this earth, shall upon this earth take place; and, though much of it I cannot explain, I would rather not be able to explain any of it, be in the dark with respect to the whole prophetic word, than not believe any one jot of it, or not be looking to it as a constant light in the midst of the darkness. This is a great controversy bequeathed to us, who know the truth; and the way in which it is to be managed is, by learning in the word of God, and patient exposition thereof, in season and out of season. I advise my friends when in company with those who disbelieve or discountenance the subject, not for a moment to hide their convictions, nor to decline giving an account of the hope that is in them; and if passages of Scripture be quoted, patiently to go into their explanation; and should they be hard and difficult, frankly to confess with Peter when writing on these subjects, that in them are many things hard to be understood, (2 Peter iii. 16;) and after thus having done our best to deliver our brethren from their fastnesses, we should freely submit to try our several opinions by the word of God; and leaving to them the choice of the ground, travel with them in the Scriptures, until both are satisfied with the occupation for that time. In such labours of love, I have found myself sometimes much tried, by the manifest attempts of the adversary, to wrest the Scriptures from their simple, plain, intelligible sense. This is an evil which must be borne with. It may be temperately reproved and rebuked, but ought not to deter us from going on with our brother, so long as he will go on with us. But as to following their abstract and metaphysical arguments, which rest upon

no text, or interpretation of a text, I counsel the angels and ministers of the churches, to abstain from such strifes of words and vain janglings, and idle babblings about theology, falsely so called; and for the encouragement of patient and unwearied labour in this behalf, I refer to the passage now under consideration. "I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, but are not; but are the synagogue of Satan." I do not say that I would use such language of those who oppose the personal advent and reign of Christ upon the earth, or even of those who deny that He took a body such as ours, because I may not judge any man: but this much will I say, that he who would quash all inquiry into these subjects, and decry the study of the prophets, and the prophetical parts of Scripture, is an enemy of the truth, and a manifest disbeliever in the word of God, and a most diligent propagator of his unbelief; and for my own part, I esteem those two questions as the two poles of a sound faith, and will ever contend earnestly against all who deny, gainsay, or deride them.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold some of you will the devil cast into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This last part of the epistle is spoken with reference to the future, foreboding many and sore trials to the Church in Smyrna. The first and the last of the three propositions which it containeth, are spoken to the angel in person, and the other to him and the members of the Church taken together. Yet we are not on that account to regard any part as of private interpretation; because it is addressed to the angel of the Church alone, who, by being an office-bearer, ceaseth not to be a Christian. So that by the rule of Christian polity, that the higher office always includes the lower, every private Christian is addressed, when the angel of the Church is addressed, when it is said to him, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer;" it is said to all, what his sufferings were to be, and how fearlessly he met, and how patiently he bore them is fully set forth in that letter from which we have made the extract. Well did Polycarpus maintain the honour of the Christian martyrs: he was faithful unto the death, and doubtless he will obtain the crown of life. Now, concerning this crown of life, it needeth that we explain a little. A crown is the symbol of a king: to promise a crown is to promise a kingdom; and in the original it is, The crown of the life. Now what is "the life" which Christ promises to him who is faithful unto the death? It is evidently not that new life which we possess by regeneration; for this we already have, and over it death hath not any power. It is some life which cometh

after death, as the reward of those who love not their lives unto the death. Now, we be all agreed that regeneration and the union of the soul with Christ thereupon, is that whose continuity death doth not dissolve, whose power death does not abate, whose enjoyment death doth greatly enlarge. The reward, therefore, promised unto the martyr is something more than this: and what more can it be, except the body raised in honour and glory? The resurrection of the body unto life is, therefore, the thing here intended. But are not the wicked to be in like manner raised from the dead. I answer, Not in like manner, for only the righteous shall possess the likeness of the glory of Christ. They are raised to immortality, to incorruption, to power, and to glory; but the wicked are raised to judgment, condemnation, and the second death. But are they not both raised to life? I answer, No. The wicked are raised, not to life, but to the second death: and it is to confound words whose meaning is directly contrary, to say that the second death is the same with life. To consciousness, indeed, they are raised, to the consciousness of everlasting misery; but this is not what Scripture means when it speaks of life; but what Scripture means when it speaks of the second death. How high was Christ's idea of life when He said, (Ps. xvi. 11,) "Thou wilt show me the path of life!" And what is the Psalmist's assertion of the wicked? (xlix. 6–9,) "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption." I freely allow that the resurrection of the righteous is no more than the impartation unto their dust of that life which in the regeneration, by baptism, their spirit doth receive; but being an integrant part, and the complete consummation of the glorious work of the Godhead in a fallen creature, I hold it to be not only distinct from, but the very contrary of, that state in which the unregenerate shall rise, of whom it is said in the same Psalm, "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning: and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling." "He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light." Whereas it is said of the righteous, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me."

I lay it down, therefore, as a great, and perhaps the greatest head of doctrine concerning things future, that the resurrection of the righteous is in all respects the opposite of the resurrection of the

wicked; the one being known in Scripture, as the resurrection unto life, and the other as the resurrection unto judgment. (John v. 29:) "And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," (judgment.) Furthermore, I assert, that, as in Scripture baptism and regeneration are spoken of as including, because they commence the life of the Holy Ghost in the soul, as representing the whole work and blessedness, and holiness thereof, so the resurrection is spoken of in Scripture, as containing, because it commenceth all the future glory and blessedness, which thenceforth we shall enjoy with Christ. And, to confound the resurrection of the wicked and the resurrection of the righteous, as if they were one act of Divine power, and to call the mere bringing up again of the body into organised consciousness, resurrection unto life, is to do away with the whole intention of the Holy Ghost by that word; which intention, I say, from the beginning of the Scripture to the end of it, is to convey thereby a peculiar specific reward unto the upright, in which the wicked have neither lot nor part. If resurrection be merely the common thing whereof all are partakers, what, I ask, is the meaning of these sentences which I quote from one of our Lord's discourses? (John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54:) "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Not to insist upon so manifest a matter, I do from these premises nothing doubt that the crown of life here spoken of is that resurrection of the body which the righteous, and the righteous alone, shall receive at His coming, being the same with that which is spoken by the Apostle Paul, (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8,) "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Now we must look in the Apocalypse for the fufilment of this promise, because it is one of the marvellous excellences of this book; that not only doth it rest upon the other Scripture, with its allusions, symbols, expressions, yea, and very words, but likewise that it containeth within itself the accomplishment of all its own

promises. Behold then, in chap. xx. the accomplishment of this prediction. (Ver. 4:) "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them." Who sat upon them? Those ones who had just come out of heaven with Christ, to contend with the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, and had destroyed them. These are they for whom the thrones are set, after that Satan had been bound. And what office do they fulfil? (Ver. 4:) "Judgment was given unto them:" they judge or rule in room of those kings who had been removed from the government of the earth. And wherefore are they so honoured? (Ver. 4:) "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands," &c. These are the services for which they are rewarded; some for being faithful unto the death, and others for standing out against Antichrist, amongst whom is included in the first class the angel of the Church in Smyrna. And what more is said of their reward, dignity, and occupation? (Ver. 4:) "They lived and reigned with Christ, a thousand years." Their distinction standeth first in life; for it is said, (ver. 5,) "But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished." Their second distinction is to reign with Christ, to be crowned and enthroned beside Him: according to His promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne." Put these distinctions together, and what do they amount to? They amount to a crown of life: the thing promised in the passage before us. Beyond a doubt therefore, and if I did not know the spirit of these times, I would say without a cavil, this promise, "I will give thee a crown of life," made unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna, and in him to all faithful martyrs, is fulfilled in the first resurrection; and the kingdom of Christ upon the earth, during the thousand years prior to the resurrection unto judgment and the casting into the lake of the second death, of every wicked thing, of every wicked person. Not that the reward of the righteous ceaseth then, or the kingdom of Christ upon the earth ceaseth then, which all Scripture declareth to be everlasting; but that every word of God to good or to bad, to men or to angels, to heaven or to earth, or to hell,—every word which hath proceeded out of the mouth of God, shall within the duration of these thousand years be accomplished; after which the unchangeable world, the immovable heavens and earth, the irreversible conditions of all things, shall begin to roll their endless course. The millennium is the settling and clearing time; and when the millennium is closed, every word of God shall be an accomplished thing like His word irreversible, like Himself unchangeable.

It remaineth now, that we explain what is contained under these words, "Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days." What is meant by these *ten days* of tribulation? I would say, let it be understood, as days are wont to be understood in Scripture when referring to time future. Now, in this respect, day in Scripture is not always, nor yet most frequently, used to signify a period of twenty-four hours. The creation was accomplished in seven days, which could not be counted by the sun, forasmuch as the sun was not created till the fourth day. The day of the Lord, so spoken of in Scripture, is not one day, but a period of time. The day of grace and of salvation, the day of vengeance, the day of slaughter, the day of judgment, &c., are not periods of twenty-four hours. When Christ says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day," He doth not mean the day of His birth, but the period of His incarnation; and innumerable other instances could I produce, to show that day in Scripture is used very often of a fixed and limited period of time; even as it is in common language, for example, a man's day and generation. We do not mean to deny, that in the generality of instances which are historical it is used to denote the period of twenty-four hours; but we assert, that it is not against the tenor of Scripture, nor the common use and wont of language, to use it in a less definite sense: and when things less definite than exact history or narrative are to be recorded, such as things future, we assert, that it is more common, we had almost said that it is constant, to use it of an indefinite period, whose duration is to be defined according to the conditions of the prophecy; but certainly not to be necessarily, nay, nor commonly, defined to twenty-four hours. I do not remember at the present moment one instance in which the term day, spoken of a thing future, signifies twenty-four hours; and I can produce fifty in which it signifies a period of not that duration. Let me refer to a few: Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 8; Phil. ii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 2; &c., &c. Now I ask the same liberty of understanding the ten days before me. If any one insist, upon the other hand, that because the number ten is set down, we must limit ourselves to literal days, I refer to Hosea vi. 2, as an instance directly the contrary, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." I refer likewise to all the visions of Daniel and the Apocalypse, of which to this hour it hath been impossible to give a consistent interpretation upon the principle of understanding the days as literal days; so that those who will cling to

this hypothesis are obliged to confess entire ignorance of those very prophecies which have in them the element of succession, and by their very structure indicate a successive evolution and progressive fulfilment, which should daily more and more discover itself. Until, therefore, instances shall be adduced of a number of days being literally used in a prophecy of future things, I am at liberty, nay, am directed by the instance in Hosea, and the other instances in Daniel and the Apocalypse, as well as by the common use of Scripture, to take these days as not definite periods of twenty-four hours, but periods which the progress of events would sufficiently define. Now all history whatever, containing any account of the Pagan persecutions, or of the days of trial to the primitive Church, doth reckon them to be in number ten. And because as every other particular in these epistles hath been found to be of a universal application to the churches, I am inclined to interpret these ten days of the ten periods of persecution, unto which all history beareth testimony that all these churches were subjected. But if any should object, that one of these persecutions was already past in Nero's time; and that the second was either in being, or already past, when John received these visions, and therefore that there were only eight to come; I answer to this objection that it hath its force from not understanding the nature of this book; which in all the instructions given to the Church contemplates her, as she was instituted on the day of Pentecost, ere yet she had brought forth any of her children. In proof of which, I need only refer to the 12th chapter, where she is represented with her crown of twelve stars, though the apostles were no longer in life, and as about to bring forth her martyrs, though already she had brought forth many of them. This other consideration I give for removing the objection, that the book of the Apocalypse contemplates everywhere all the witnesses, all the saints, all the martyrs of Jesus; and therefore cannot have its virtual commencement as a constructed book from any time but the day of Pentecost, when Christ began to act as Head of the Church by baptizing with the Holy Ghost. What have we then revealed to the primitive churches in these words, uttered to the persecuted saints of Smyrna? It is revealed to them, that for their purgation they should ten times undergo severest tribulation, in the midst of which the faithful and true witnesses are called upon not to be afraid of those things which they should suffer, but to continue faithful unto the death, and they should receive a crown of life. Persecution is to a Church what the loss of children is to a family: and by this very similitude we have it set forth in the 23d verse of this chapter. It is not to be looked upon as a good, therefore, but as an evil; not to be sought after as a blessing,

but to be received as a sore trial. I do not find in the history of the Church as it is recorded by the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, that they were ever given into the hands of a cruel lord, for any other cause but chastisement for their sins. Surely it is God's severity, who loveth not to afflict the children of men, but delighteth ever to bless them. And yet so needful is suffering to the perfection of our graces, that the Lord himself, though a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and by sufferings was made perfect. Now the servant is not greater than his master; and that we who are children of God shall surely have our share of the like tribulation, is declared to us in every part of Scripture, especially by St Paul in the 12th chapter of the Hebrews, where he saith, (6, 7, 11,) "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? . . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby." While, therefore, nature shrinketh and misgiveth in the midst of sore and direful temptation; and that this is not sinful, the agony of Christ well showeth; the spirit of the sufferer is willing to endure for the knowledge it hath of God's purpose, and the zeal it hath for His glory and the Church's weal, saying with St Paul, (Col. i. 24,) "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church." For knowing how God loved Christ, how God was one with Christ, how the unity of their substance was never divided, and the greatness of their love never abated, though He laid upon Him all our sufferings and all our diseases, and brought Him into tribulations never yet felt, and never again to be felt by a living soul, the believer feeleth assured that every member of Christ may be brought into the same agonies of spirit, anguish and torture of body, and horror of thick darkness over the mind, and in the midst of it all retain the same unbroken, unclouded love of God as at other times: yea, more; thereby win a higher place in God's love, by patiently for His sake enduring this, and all that He can lay on; as a faithful wife gladly endureth for the love she hath unto her husband, or a loyal subject for the honour he beareth to his king.

This consciousness, this conviction of a love in God towards the children of men, which no outward circumstances nor inward distresses can in aught disturb, is, I take it, the great lesson taught by the extremities to which the Son of God in flesh was reduced. It not only proved how low the Godhead in the person of the Son could

come, for the redemption of a creature; and how much Godhead in the person of the Holy Ghost could do for the salvation of a creature; but it likewise showed how much the Godhead in the person of the Father could lay upon a creature without any dismissal of His love to it, without any change of the eternal relations between the creature and the Creator; proving this main point of divine truth, that the creation after it had been overwhelmed with sin by the transgression of its monarch, man, was not the less beloved of God, whose love to His creatures changeth not by their changes, but abideth unto the end the same. This great truth, this only consolation, this pre-existent cause and spring of redemption, this first principle and moving power in God, which moved Him to send His Son, how could it otherwise be revealed, be clearly and indubitably revealed, but by exhibiting His Son who is one with Himself, unchangeably one with Himself, overladen with the distresses, darkness, and thick darkness of a sinful world, and brought into the condition of a dead, dissolved life; yet all the while loved the same, and confiding in that love, and so by love of the Father, and faith of Jesus, saved himself and saving all. If any one stand before me and say, But Christ was not brought into any such swimming darkness, I sweep such an objector from his place by repeating to him the 22d Psalm, vers. 1, 2 6, 14, 15: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent. . . . But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. . . . I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." And if more be wanting, I hurl against such wicked perverters of the truth the words of the 69th Psalm, vers. 16–21:—"Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving-kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." O ye ungrateful men, ye unbelieving men, ye vain janglers, have ye no hearts, have ye no bowels to compassionate the Man of Sorrows? Will ye be ever saying that these

rending cries of His, these burstings of heart, these desolations of flesh and spirit, these drops of blood expressed by a working, troubled, melted heart, are not what they seem to be?—are not real natural weaknesses?—are not flesh-and-blood grievances?—are not heavings and tossings of the soul, over which all the water-spouts of God are poured, and over which the billows of His fierce anger went amain? Forgive them, Father; they know not what they do. Forgive them, Lord Jesus; they know not what they say nor whereof they affirm. Make their wisdom foolishness: take vengeance upon their inventions: but, oh have mercy upon their soul, and deliver them from all their deadly error.

This awful manifestation of God's fixed love, and of the creature's fixed faith upon God's unchangeable love, is the basis of all joy in suffering, of all patience in tribulation, of all victory in persecution; yea, is the basis of all righteousness whatsoever. And I cannot help both feeling and saying, that the continual presentation of Christ's sufferings, as the price of God's love, has done a world of mischief in obscuring this truth, as well as every other. That our salvation comes out of those sufferings, is a truth never to be gainsayed. But how? I do not press the question, how? but if a minister of the Church be working upon a false answer, I will answer the question rightly, in order to disabuse the Church. How then do the sufferings of Christ procure our salvation? By showing that God's love is not weakened by the darkness of our mind, nor the mortality of our flesh; that there is a love in God to be trusted in by human nature in its last and lowest ebbs, and in its dying perplexities, and in its dead condition, and in all its estates, from the womb unto the grave; for in all those conditions was Christ the beloved one, and in them all and under them all was equally beloved. But if they say (for they have said, and they will say, and let them say, yet for all their sayings the word of the Lord is steadfast; if they say) that He was not a sinner: True; but He was treated as a sinner, as the greatest sinner, as the only sinner. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree; He was made sin for us who knew no sin; He was made a curse for us;" and there is not one mood of despondency, and of grief, and of desperate sorrow, in which a sinner was ever found, for which the most appropriate language is not to be found in those Psalms which the Holy Ghost wrote for Jesus, and which Jesus in the days of His flesh appropriated to Himself. And what is the end and meaning of Christ's coming into all the sinless conditions of sinful man, and having laid upon Him all the sins of all sinful men, save to exhibit and manifest God's love, unchangeable and unchanged, by all these the fatal consequences of the fall. This is one part of the an-

swer to the question, How do the sufferings of Christ procure our salvation? They give us in God's love the object of faith. Now observe that this comes not to those who either disbelieve His true Divinity, consubstantial with the Father's, or His true humanity consubstantial with ours. Deny the first, and there is no proof of the unchanging love of God to Christ; for, to outward apearance, He is not God but the most marred of men. It is not of sight, but of faith, to believe that all the while He is one of substance with the Father. Again: disbelieve the latter, (as some unstable and unlearned persons in these days do, God forgive them!) and the proof fails entirely. God's love is proved only to human nature in that better form of it which Christ assumed. It has not come so low as our state, and therefore we have no ground of hope, but rather the reverse. But being both God and man in one person, the proof is complete and irrefragable, that God is love to the most abject miserable sinner who lives, and moves, and hath his being upon the face of this troublous world.

But, as hath been said, this is only half the answer to the question, How do the sufferings of Christ procure our salvation? For we want not only the disclosure of the object of faith, but we also want the proof that faith can take hold, and keep hold of it, despite the devil and all his angels; and this the faith, not of a faultless man, but of an infirm and sinful man, such as all men are. Now how is this steadfastness of faith, this uplifting and upholding power of faith shown in the sufferings of Christ? The sufferings are but the opposing force, the ocean load upon the breast of man, from beneath the depths of which he hath to be uplifted, under the load of which he hath to be enabled to walk at large and in liberty. Now the Son of God, by coming into the conditions of very sinful man, partly by taking part of sinful flesh, and partly by having guilt of sin imputed to Him, did, under that ocean load, act faith upon the unchanged love and power of God, and did receive from God, in answer to His faith, strength to bear upon His shoulders and walk in majesty and grace, in glory and in power, in victory and in triumph, under the mass, the monstrous mass, of a world's sin, of a world's mortality, of the Father's pronounced curse: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And may any single man do this? No: not as a single man: for Christ did it not as a single man; but He did it in manhood united to and supported by the Son of God; and thereby did prove, that not in single manhood, but in manhood united to and supported by the Son of God, such faith is possible, such triumphs of faith are certain. Therefore we are taught that, anterior to triumphant faith, there must be union with the human

nature of Christ; and so union with His mighty person: which truth being expressed in His own Divine language, standeth thus: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so, he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," (John vi. 53–57.) Now, into the faith of this union for himself, and for his children, baptism introduces every man; and he who believeth in the sacrament of baptism, as a seal of the New Testament, is united unto the Son by being united to His human nature: and being so united, I, a human person, acting in this flesh, made one with His flesh, and having in it the same power of the Holy Spirit as was in His, do act faith even as He did, who brought Himself into the very condition of a man; and by so acting faith in the unity of my flesh with His, I have in His holiness the assurance of my holiness, in His conformity to the Father the assurance of mine, in His victory over the devil the assurance of mine, in His power of faith the assurance of mine, in His resurrection the assurance of mine, in His acceptance with the Father the assurance of mine, in His personal glory as the Son of man, (though not in His Father's glory, with which no creature intermeddleth,) the assurance of mine. I am crucified with Him; with Him I am delivered out of hell's hands: with Him I am delivered from the grave; and with Him I am seated in the heavenly places, and with Him I shall come again, and with Him I shall reign as a king and a priest for ever. And thus it is that the sufferings of Christ procure me salvation, by giving me an object of faith in God's love, in all extremities, and under all conditions; and by giving me the proof, that a person into my conditions brought, and in my conditions subsisting, may through faith be brought out victorious in every conflict.

It is necessary to observe, that Christ, though not a human person, ever acteth as a human person, under the conditions of a human person, within that defined sphere of creature being; and this is the meaning of His name, the Son of man. But while thus acting within bounds, He ceaseth not to be the Son of God. He is Son of God, in that it is He who ever consenteth to become Son of man: and He is Son of man, in that He hath ever consented to be so. But His actings in the Godhead who can understand, who can speak of? They have no commensurateness with human language, nor with creature intelligence. But if any one, out of this unknown and un-

knowable and unsearchable something would derive an argument, or in his own mind harbour a suspicion, that His consciousness in the manhood was not true manly consciousness, and His sufferings in the body true manly sufferings, and His words in the body expressions of true manly feelings, that man is using His Godhead to extinguish His manhood; that man is mingling His Godhead with His manhood, confusing and confounding them; that man is arrogating to himself both to understand and to discourse of Godhead; he is making His manhood a fiction, the Gospels an imaginary tale, and faith a foolish fancy. But if a man say, Here is a something in His Godhead, which, though unknown and inexpressible, is the source and fountain-head of every one of His actings and sufferings, and triumphings in man's estate, and this something I want for myself also, in order to my obtaining His fellowship, His fellowship of suffering, His fellowship of victory, I answer to that man, Thou hast spoken right well: it is most necessary, that of this unknown source and origin thou shouldst also partake, in what way Christ as a human person did partake of the same. And this also thou dost, through union of thy human nature, through union of thy flesh and blood with His flesh and blood; for then hast thou sustentation from His Godhead, even as He himself had sustentation from the same. And thus art thou a human person, acting in the community of His flesh and blood, and through that fellowship having hold of His Divine nature, to strengthen and support thee, and give thee the victory, even as He was strengthened and supported, and got the victory when out of His Godhead, He ever and continually condescended into His manhood, to act there within the bounds and limits of a human person.

And now, having brought out this great truth of the fellowship of the believer with Christ in all His trials, persecutions, and triumphs, I desire devoutly to acknowledge unto God His great goodness in permitting me to understand, and enabling me to express, and honouring me to defend this great truth, which is now on all hands either doubted of, or called in question, or denied, or, to put the best face upon things, is looked upon as a piece of curious and nice speculation. O my God! thou who knowest that it is the all in all, teach us more to honour, better to know, and more firmly to believe this most precious truth, that in the trials which are around us, we may be found more patient and joyful, in our testimony to the truth more full and faithful, in our love to thee more devoted, in thy love to us more trustful; of our union with Christ more mindful; of the power of the Holy Ghost more confident, and by the knowledge of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, more fruitful in every good

word and work. If I seek mine own glory in these writings, then let me not prosper: if thy glory I seek and promote, then, O Father, let thy Son be glorified in me; and the glory which thou gavest Him, give to me, according to His own prayer for all believers: and grant, O Father, that I may be with Him where He is, and that I may behold His glory which thou hast given Him, for thou lovedst Him before the foundation of the world. O God, how precious is thy truth! therefore shall men's sons put their trust in thee.

Besides the statement of these great doctrines, through which persecution is to be cheerfully borne, there are one or two remarks which we have to make before dismissing this part of the subject. The first is concerning the devil, who is represented in the text as the head and leader of these persecutions. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days." This confirmeth me in my interpretation of these ten days, as referring to the ten times of persecution, which the Christian Church endured from pagan Rome; immediately upon the last and fiercest of which, she obtained the victory over Paganism in the exaltation of Constantine to the throne; for in the 12th chapter, which presents the Church not under the symbol of seven candlesticks, but as a chaste and beautiful woman, the mother of saints, the antagonist persecuting power, represented under the symbols of the Roman empire, as we shall see, is declared (ver. 9) to be that old serpent called the devil and Satan. Now, if the devil be there represented as the actor of all the temptations done against the Church anterior to the period of the Arian persecutions, or rather to the time of Constantine; then we should reasonably conclude that the same complete action of evil is likewise given to him in this passage before us; and consequently, that the ten days are the ten persecutions, which fell in upon the Church from the time of Nero till the time of Constantine the Great; that is, from the year of our Lord 56, until the year of our Lord 310. In whatever form, therefore, temptation comes, whether from Paganism, Popery, or Infidelity, the devil is its instigator, and his children are its promoters: whether they wear a crown or bear a crosier, they are the seed of the serpent, who persecute the Church; and if they repent not, they shall have their portion in the lake that burneth; for "verily, verily, he that offendeth one of Christ's little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were tied about his neck and he cast into the sea." There is such a fearful verdict of God written against the persecutors of the Church in the book of doom, as when it is foretold in the Book of Revelation doth make men start all aghast; and in the present irreverence and infidelity of the Church

towards God's word; in the present fast and loose interpretations thereof, it is the custom of our mealymouthed preachers to explain away these passages of the Psalms which denounce comminations direful upon the persecutors of Christ and His Church. Even some there be, incoherent fools, or rather blasphemers, who put such passages down to the score of David's vindictiveness, and the lower morality of the Law of Moses. But in the name of the Lord God, whose word cannot be broken, I protest against and abjure all such defamations of the holy text;—for example of the 109th Psalm, which is expressly quoted by the Holy Ghost in the mouth of the apostles, and applied to Judas the traitor, the first great persecutor within the bosom of the Church. To deter all kings and judges of the earth, to deter all churchmen, be they Papist, Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, from afflicting and persecuting the members of Christ Jesus, I write out a portion of the burden of that Psalm; which I myself, within the bounds of the realm of Scotland, could show verified in many conspicuous examples of families enduring the long penance of their fathers' guilt in persecuting the Church, and exhibiting the certainty and invariableness of God's purpose, as announced in these awful words: "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. . . . . As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul," (Ps. cix. 6–20.)

And now concerning the ten persecutions of the Church instigated by the devil, and promoted by Pagan Rome, though it is not my purpose to write historically thereof, which may be found in any book of ecclesiastical story, yet have I a remark to make thereon, which I reckon of no small importance. As hath been said above, persecution is a chastisement from the Lord, brought upon the Church for her sins; in bearing which she doth well to examine herself, for God is proving her, and to reform her ways with which He is offended. Forgetting this, the primitive Church adopted the erroneous principle, that persecution is the sign of God's favour. Confusing the end and fruit of chastisement, which is our holiness and good, with the origin and source of chastisement, which is our

evil; they thought that when the Church is cast into the furnace, she hath therein a proof of God's joy and satisfaction with her state and condition. And by this error, she was diverted from searching out the secret sins within herself, on account of which God visited her with the loss of children. Now I am as fully convinced that the ten persecutions of the Church proceeded from ten provocations, as I am, that the judgments which came upon the children of Israel, from the time they left Egypt, till they were cast back, from the borders of Canaan, into the bowels of the waste howling wilderness, proceeded from the ten provocations with which God complaineth that they had so grievously provoked Him, (Num. xiv.) And I believe, furthermore, that as the children of Israel were cast into the wilderness on account of these ten provocations, and perished there, all except Caleb and Joshua, so the Christian Church was driven into the wilderness of the Papacy on account of these ten provocations which brought on the first ten persecutions. But it came to pass from that persecution-loving spirit, that glory of martyrdom which possessed the Church like a passion, I had almost said like a mania, during the first three centuries,—it came to pass that instead of interpreting the hand of God in these visitations, they went on in their full race towards that corruption and worldliness, which persecution indeed kept down while it lasted, but which burst forth with rank luxuriance under the fostering favour of Constantine and his successors. Be it never forgotten, therefore, that persecution is an evil, and a great one, not willingly inflicted on the Church, but brought upon her for her purification from some mixture of impurity. Still let not this tarnish the glory of the martyr's crown, nor let it discourage the faithfulness of the martyr's testimony, nor disparage the meed of the martyr's praise: for thus it is, when the devil is loosed and raging, that the glory of God, in frail man, is shown forth triumphant over the devil's utmost rage. Then it is, that out of the mouths of frail mortals, of babes and sucklings, God's praise is advanced, and the enemy and avenger is brought low. "They overcame him by their blood and the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives unto the death." Then it is, that the gold and the fine gold of the candlestick appeareth: then it is, that the precious wheat of the barn floor is separated from the chaff and laid up in the garners of heaven: then it is, that the good fishes are separated from the bad, and stored for the Master's use: then it is, that "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, is found unto praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i. 8, 9.)

THE SPIRIT'S SECOND PROMISE.

III. We now come to the third part of each epistle, which is the promise of the Spirit addressed in the holy catholic ecclesiastical style, which is proper to it;—holy, "to him that overcometh;" catholic, "he that hath an ear let him hear;" ecclesiastical, "what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Upon this manner of address we have nothing to add to what we set forth in our former lecture, with which in our mind we desire now to proceed to consider the promise itself, which is expressed in these words, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Here again is a great subject in few words expressed, which our limits will barely permit us to open.

The first step towards a right interpretation of any difficult and disputed matter is rightly to understand the terms in which it is expressed. Now this expression, "the second death," is peculiar to the Apocalypse, being found nowhere else in Scripture, and what is signified thereby is amply explained to us in the 20th and 21st chapters of this book; in the former of which it is said of those who partake in the first resurrection, of those who receive the crown of glory for being faithful and not loving their lives unto the death, (ver. 6,) "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." This helps us to the meaning of the words in the text, "shall not be hurt;" being to us, who are placed in conflict with the powers of darkness, the assurance of the first resurrection, which will include those from amongst the dead who are exempted, for their faithfulness, from the injury of the second death. The first death they braved for Christ, and entered fearless into His hold; and from His hold, by Christ they are snatched. Whether or not, of those who have died before the first resurrection, all that are not raised, then shall be adjudged to the second death, after the thousand years are accomplished, I dare not positively to affirm, nor is it necessary to the full and satisfactory explanation of the matter in hand. It is sufficient to be informed, that of those who are raised in the first resurrection, no one shall ever again return to corruption. This, I say, is sufficient to explain the expression in our text, "He that overcometh shall not be injured of the second death;" and for those who are left unredeemed from hell's hand, still under death's dark oppression, we need not in this place to affirm anything whatever. Now though this singular privilege and honour be not anywhere else in Scripture, by the same terms expressed, yet is it, like every other great principle of the kingdom, contained implicitly in all the Scrip-

tures. I think the first notice of it is given in Enoch's prophecy, and Enoch's reward. His prophecy was in these words, (Jude 14, 15,) "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Now, if the Lord was to come with ten thousand of His saints to do judgment upon the living, these saints must first have been taken from the hold of death; and therefore I make no doubt that Enoch's prophecy was substantially to teach how the verdict pronounced upon mankind in Paradise could be, and should be, made subservient to the Lord's triumph over sin, and death, and all ungodly men and angels, in the first resurrection of the saints, and the execution of judgment by their means upon the ungodly living, and in the setting up thereafter of a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth, under the whole face of heaven, for ever and ever. And this promise of victory over death, and triumph over ungodly men, doth Enoch's prophecy convey unto the saints, and unto them alone. Now, the great difficulty in the way of believing this, was the universal occurrence of death to the godly, as well as to the ungodly: there was no resurrection of the Son of man for the preacher to preach in those days: therefore God, to give them an instance which should confirm Enoch's doctrine, and put His own power to vanquish death in the resurrection of His saints beyond all question, doth make Enoch himself the positive instance, and by removing him beyond death's bourne, without tasting of death's power, he did prove that death was still but God's slave, whose services could be dispensed with, when God so pleased; and by making this state consequent upon Enoch's holy walk and conversation, beyond death it was shown to be the reward of the righteous, the inheritance of the saints; and thus from the beginning the victory over death, whether by resurrection from the dead or change of the living, was made the substance of preaching and exhibited as the reward of faith in the truth which God gave His servants to preach. That preaching which propoundeth any other, any lesser reward, than the first resurrection and victory over death, judgment with Christ of the living, and kingdom with Christ on the earth, and presentation unto God as kings and priests for ever, is not the full preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, is not the perfect exhibition of God's goodness, grace, and love, of man's redemption, salvation, and glorious destiny: in this conviction, coolly delivered, I do challenge the great body of preaching, almost all the preaching which now is preached, yea, and I may say which hath been preached since

the primitive age, as short of the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. This also is the reason why Paul in his cloud of witnesses connecteth the reward with Enoch's translation in these words, (Heb. xi. 5, 6,) "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In which passage he concludes that Enoch had faith from these premises that he pleased God, and received the reward of God, showing what his notion of the reward was, even translation beyond the bourne of death. But it may be asked, How did this act done unto Enoch, which was not resurrection, show forth the resurrection? My answer is, In that way of incompleteness which is proper, yea, necessary to every type: very resurrection from the dead could not be until Christ should, in His own person and in His own power, accomplish it; for in all things, and in this especially, was He to have the pre-eminence. The instances of raising from the dead in the Old Testament and in the Gospels are not resurrection; for all these returned again to death, to lie for a season under death's power; whereas the substance of resurrection is, rising so as never again to return to corruption. They were indeed exhibitions of death under God's control, and at His bidding, but not of resurrection. So also Enoch's was not resurrection, nor do I think that it was change into the spiritual body, in which also Christ must have the pre-eminence; and to this agreeth the word used by Paul, which is not ἀλλαγσω, change of substance, used 1 Cor. xv. 52, but μετατίθημι, change of place, Heb. xi. 5; but change of place from the death-governed earth, unto some place where death cometh not. It was therefore the exhibition of a place beyond death's dominion, where man might and should exist; and so far forth it taught the substance of the first resurrection and the reward of the saints.

Now it would be tedious to follow this great revelation through all its opening forms in the book of God. Suffice it to say, that Abraham's faith rests upon it as a postulate; that is to say, it is not a part of his faith, so much as that universally received and believed truth, upon which his faith rested; which was taken for granted by God, as existing in His mind already, when He made promises to him of inheriting a land of which He gave him not a foot. This is the reason why God makes no allusion to his being raised to inherit the land; because Abraham had no need of any such explanation, being already a believer in the resurrection. This is the one and

simple falsehood upon which Bishop Warburton's Divine Legation is founded, who argued, that the future state is not mentioned: true, it is not mentioned, because it is everywhere pre-supposed, and indeed is the postulatum or pre-requisite to the inheritance of any of God's promises, for death is a fixed thing, fixed by God's word, and cannot be done away with; and all within death is the leading on to death. If God, therefore, promise good to men, eternal, essential, and unchangeable good, it can only be promised to men in the understanding of a resurrection from death to possess it. Can anything demonstrate more clearly, how God intended the resurrection to be the basis and preliminary condition of every promise, than His taking to Himself that name, The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob? the God not of dead men, but of living men; living in His purpose, and to live in His fulfilment of that purpose. Upon Abraham's firm belief in the resurrection, the apostle rests the principle and the worthiness of the great act of obedience in offering up his son Isaac. (Heb. xi. 17–19:) "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also, he received him in a figure." Job again, who, I think, with the most judicious interpreters, was of the patriarchal age, and his book a relic of patriarchal religion, doth, when brought to the utmost desperation, rise aloft above it all, upon the wings of hope, whose eye looketh steadily at the resurrection of the flesh. (Job xix. 25–27:) "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." And how much he prized this strong consolation, he well expresseth in the preamble or preface with which he introduceth it: "Oh that my words were now written, oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" (ver. 23, 24.) Now, in contrast with this passage should ever be taken the confession of the conscience-stricken Balaam, who was as firm a believer in the resurrection as was Job, but saw it not, like him, as the ground of consolation: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh," (Num. xxiv. 17.) I have already referred to the 49th Psalm, as containing one of the fullest forthshowings of the reward of the righteous, and likewise to the 5th and 6th chapters of John's Gospel; and in my last lecture, I enlarged upon the passage in the

20th chapter of Luke; and out of the many that now press upon me, illustrative of the same universal truth, I shall only select one, and open it a little for the instruction and consolation of the Church. It is contained in the 25th and 26th chapters of Isaiah.

After the ten burdens contained between the 13th and the 24th chapters, the prophet, generalising, and as it were consummating, and in one description including them all, doth in the 24th chapter set forth in words of fear and anguish the judgment of the quick and the desolation of the world, at the time of the coming forth of the Lord, which is thus defined, (ver. 23,) "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Then follows the song of His people, whom in that day He visiteth, to plant them again in their own land, beside His holy mountain; where, among other glorious actions that He will do, this is mentioned, (chap. xxv. 8,) "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces;" which words, though doubtless they contain in them the historical mystery of the discovery of Israel's long-lost tribes, we can, on divine warrant, assert do contain also and embody, chiefly, the mystery of the first resurrection,—the resurrection of the righteous; which shall be at the last trump. In that glorious change and resurrection which is described 1 Cor. xv. 50–54, and hath nothing to do whatever with the resurrection of the wicked, which is corruption and the second death; in that act, I say, of the resurrection of the saints, which is the first resurrection, a thousand years before the resurrection of the dead, it is said, (ver. 54,) "So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." This seals the import of the first clause of Isaiah's prophecy; and for the second, "The Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces," I find it to be taken into the Book of the Revelation, and applied to the condition of the risen saints in the New Jerusalem, (Rev. vii. 17,) "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." And again, (Rev. xxi. 4,) "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Doubt, therefore, can there be none, that the resurrection of those, who shall not be hurt by the second death, is the thing prophesied to take place at the time of the coming of the Lord of hosts to reign in Mount Zion, at the time of His bringing down the terrible ones which have de-

stroyed His earth, at the time of His making in Mount Zion a feast of fat things unto all peoples, and there destroying the veil that is spread over all nations, and making the rebuke of His people to be taken away from off all the earth; "for the Lord hath spoken it," (Isaiah xxv.) Thus firmly and fixedly is the event of the first resurrection, and the New Jerusalem's glory, indented and dove-tailed in among the events of real history, the revolutions of this very earth. But this glad hope of the faithful and victorious Church of Christ hath a further and more distinct opening in these two chapters of Isaiah. After describing in most fearful wise the destruction of Moab in that day, and setting forth the triumphant song of delivered Judah; which song is too large for the mere historical event of Israel's restoration, though including it, and not to be divorced from it, as being the great historical type of a greater historical event, which is the recovery of the Church from death's hand; the Holy Spirit doth use that symbol of a woman's travail, which by our Lord is used, John xvi. 21, of the same day of His coming, and by Paul, in Rom. viii. 22, of the emancipation of the elemental world from Satan's thraldom, in that same glorious day.

Now be it observed, there is not in nature such an image as woman's travail for expressing that event; which, looking to the substance of it, is the bringing again of the Son, out of the womb of the invisible, into the visible world, for ever to abide therein; which, looking to the circumstances of it, is with long-deferred hope, growing towards the consummation into longing desire, and accomplished with rending pangs, yet issuing in joy, transport of joy, that the Man-child is born into the world; which, again, for the time of it, is fixed and definite, but as it approaches all uncertain as to the very hour, inducing continual preparation and readiness, yea, and longing, until the fierce trial be overpast, and the joy be come. By this most expressive similitude, dignifying and sanctifying that sorest trial of humanity, having expressed the condition of the parturient Church, and the weakness to which at length she is brought, and her own lamentation over her own unprofitableness in the earth,—"we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth"—the Holy Spirit comforteth the Church with these words, spoken in the person of the Christ, "Thy dead shall live; my dead body shall they arise:" which words, without any gloss whatever of an interpreter, convey their own meaning to be, that the deliverance which the Church lamented she had not wrought upon the earth should be wrought by the raising of her dead men, who are promised this, among other things, that they should rule the nations with a rod of iron and break them in pieces

like a potter's vessel. These dead men of the Church He honours by the name of His dead body, according to the universal symbol of the Apostle Paul, which representeth the Church as the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. "Thy dead shall live; my dead body shall they arise." Then there follow two invocations; the one to the dead, the other to the living saints. That addressed to the dead saints is in these words: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead!" This is the first resurrection. Why in this and in other places, as in the 110th Psalm, should it be compared to the dew of the morning, which resteth upon every herb, refresheth and cherisheth it, and maketh it to profit from the rising sun, which, otherwise would scorch up its verdure; herein seems to me to consist the propriety and significance of this beautiful symbol, that the children of the resurrection, unlike the fly of Egypt, and the bee of Assyria, or the palmer worm, or the locust, or the canker, or the caterpillar which rests upon all bushes, and upon all herbs of the fruit-bearing earth, (symbols these of successive tyrannies consuming the life of man's blessedness,)—the children of the resurrection shall be unto the grass, as the dew for purity, and as the drops of the dew for number; and by their refreshing influence shall make all withered places verdant, and all desolate places to bud and blossom like the rose; under whose benign and righteous government the sun shall not smite by day, nor yet the moon by night. For this benediction of the fruit-bearing earth, for this invigoration of all life, for this refreshing of all faintness, shall the dead rise in the morning, awaking from the dust and singing the songs of the morning; and, like the morning star, shedding the hope of a bright and a glorious day over the troubled face of nature. These inhabitants of the dust having first invoked, (for the dead in Christ must rise first,) God speaking in the person of the Son doth next invoke the living saints according to the order mentioned by the same apostle, (1 Thess. iv. 17,) "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." And to these living ones what doth the Son of God proclaim? He summoneth them up into the chambers of salvation with these words, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast," (Isa. xxvi. 20;) which I make no doubt referreth to a deliverance of the living saints before the judgments fall in upon the nations. Up within the skirts of that glorious cloud in which He shall come to execute His Father's faithful word, of deliverance unto Judah and Israel, of

perdition unto Antichrist, of all sorest calamities to the world,—up within the skirts of that cloud which once arose over Egypt to guide the children of the Lord from thence, and confounded Pharaoh and his host, and inwrapped the summit of Sinai, and rode marching in the heavens through the wilderness, and rested in Shiloh in the tabernacle, and in the temple of Jerusalem made its seat, and departed from the earth in the days of Ezekiel; and hath not visited us again save at times, as in the mount of transfiguration and unto Saul in his way to Damascus, but which Ezekiel, with the Psalmist, assureth us shall come again,—up within the skirts of that cloud with which Messiah shall come again, not manifestly but in His sign riding upon the cherub, (Ps. xviii.,) which is His Church,—up thither, which, with the sound of the last trumpet shall we, His waiting-people, be summoned into the ark of salvation, into the chambers of His presence, being counted worthy to escape all these things which are coming upon the earth, and to stand before the Son of man. The full manifestation of this glorious mystery, to which all the world is asleep, and the Church also, I am daily expecting before that seventh vial be outpoured. God is rewarding my labours with this most cheerful hope, with this most gladdening expectation; and I can not only say to the congregation, Wait for Him, but I can say unto Himself, I do wait for thee. And oh, all ye who hear and read these words, cast away your fear of Him; cut the Gordian knot of your argumentation and sophistry, O ye worldly-wise; ye doubters, ye self-sanctifying doubters, be ashamed of your doubt and believe. All ye virgins, by times while it is called to-day, before the night cometh when no man can work, trim your lamps, gird your loins, up, go forth, meet the bridegroom, who saith, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast," (Isa. xxvi. 20.) For behold what follows, after all hath been gathered from the tares in the harvest, when the children of the kingdom have been taken up within the foldings of the glorious cloud; hear and tremble, oh ye children of men, "For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent, and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea," (Isa. xxvii. 1.) This is the action of judgment upon the nations, which Christ and His people, which the man-child personal and the man-child mystical, which the head and the body, which the Word of God upon the white horse, clothed in a garment

dipped in blood, and the armies of heaven likewise riding upon white horses; in one word, without a figure, which the Lord of hosts from the white could scattereth and shooteth forth, like arrows of lightnings and tempests of hail upon His enemies, to rid the world of its oppressors, as it is written in the 11th and the 18th Psalms, and in all the Scriptures, "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear."

Having thus detailed this instance of what I hold to be the universal law of God's revelation; that the first resurrection, the triumph over death, the deliverance from the injury of the second death which is the substance of the promise before us, is the continual reward held out to the faithful; I do now proceed for the full exposition of the promise before us, to consider in a few words what is properly signified by escape from the second death, and what really is this second death from which we have escaped. This also we will best learn from the Book of Revelation, which is not only the interpreter of the other Scriptures, but its own interpreter. In the 14th verse of the 20th chapter, it is written; "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." And again, (chap. xxi. 8,) "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." From these passages we learn, that the second death is the condition of conscious beings subsisting in the lake of fire. Now of this lake of fire we have many intimations in Scripture, of which it will be good to examine a few before endeavouring to come to any conclusions. In the 19th chapter, at the 20th verse, where the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet, which are the temporal and spiritual powers of Christendom, is described, it is said: "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone;" by which, I understand, that in that day of the consummation of wrath, the enemies of Christ thus designated, that is, the whole institute of apostate power, and apostate priesthood, shall, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, go down quick into the pit. At the end of the millennium the devil also, in whom as the head I suppose all inferior angels to be represented, is cast, (xx. 10:) "And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." And this is all the information which we have concerning the lake of fire in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. But in the Gospels and other Scriptures we have frequent allusions made to it—as,

for example, in the judgment of the nations, (Matt. xxv. 41,) it is said unto those who persecuted His people, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But perhaps the most remarkable passage in all the Scriptures concerning this point, is to be found in Mark ix. 43–48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Now this most fearful description of hell-fire, where three times it is set in opposition unto life, though not denominated the second death, three times described not only by fire the element of bodily torture, but by the gnawing worm, the symbol of undying remorse of conscience;—this passage, I say, in which the eternity and misery of the damned is so expressed, as if to put universalism and purgatory out of the possibility of being ever thought of, doth rest upon a passage in the Prophet Isaiah, from which the language is almost literally taken: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh," (Isa. lxvi. 23, 24.) This presents us with a hell upon earth, in the neighbourhood of the city of Jerusalem; and parallel to this, is the concluding words of the Apocalypse, (Rev. xxii. 14, 15:) "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." And the same mystery seems to me to be taught in the 59th Psalm. It is a great mystery which I am not called upon to open now, as it will come in its own place.

The only question before us at present is, why it should be called the second death. I think it is so called from its resemblance to the first death in this particular, that it brings those who are its victims into a state of impotence, passiveness, inactivity, and helpless

endurance of ill. The first death is separation of soul and body: but this is not the character of the second death, before which they are united. The first death is the dissolution of the body into unconscious dust, and the imprisonment of the soul in hades; when the wicked are conscious, I believe, but confined; the subject of its own lusts and passions preyed upon by the memory of evil, and the presence of hopeless remediless evil, while the body is preyed upon by the worm. This passiveness of condition is the character of the first death to all whom Christ hath not redeemed; and this passiveness to misery is likewise the form of the second death. Now seeing this estate of the second death comes upon the apostates in the Church at the beginning of the millennium, and not upon the devil and his angels, and other men, until the end of it: the promise in the text to every one that overcometh, of not being hurt by the second death, is an assurance against apostasy, and the consequences of apostasy. Apostasy is that falling away from the faith, that return unto the lusts from which we had clean escaped, that disseveration from the body of Christ to which we had been joined, which is continually referred to in all the Scriptures, and especially in the writings of the apostles. Whereof the certain doom is the second death during the millennium, expressed by casting the beast and the false prophet alive into the lake of fire, while during the same time those who have not his mark—that is, all Christians who have not fallen away from the Lamb, and from the foundation of Mount Zion—do enter into life, do inherit the crown of life. I think I am right in saying, that during the millennium, the lake of fire contains only the apostates from the faith, whose character is described in such places of Scripture as the following, to which we only refer, 2 Thess. ii.; 1 Tim. iv.; Heb. vi. and x.; 2 Pet. ii.; Jude; but at the end of the millennium, all others whose names shall not be found written in the Book of Life shall have their portion therein, and the devil and his angels shall have their portion there, and death and hades shall likewise have their portion there. But where the place of that direful congregation shall be, after the millennium, I find not. Upon the earth I believe it will not be; for even the sea is not any longer there, and all things are made new. Somewhere without, out of the blessed heavens and earth, redeemed from the curse, somewhere in the regions of Chaos and of Old Night, shall these children of darkness have their habitation; concerning whose condition many thoughts of a very far range, and hard to be uttered, rise before me, which I forbear to express until in their proper place, under the 20th chapter, I shall have an opportunity of unfolding them fully. Let that which hath been said suffice for clearing up the deep and hidden

truth, which is contained in the Spirit's Second Promise "to him that overcometh."

Great, vast, yea, almost infinite, are the subjects which have come before us in this lecture. There is a grandeur about the Epistle to the Church of Smyrna, which I have done my endeavour, certainly, but very imperfectly succeeded, in representing by mine unworthy thoughts and unskilful words. There is a severe simplicity, a solemn majesty, an unutterable consolation in its few lines, which I feel and admire, and have sought, but poorly succeeded, to express; yet what I have done, being done according to my gift, and in perfect sincerity, I know that my God willingly accepteth: and I pray the holy Catholic Church and communion of saints to receive in good part these offerings of my best thoughts, and to sanction them with their approval, and to use them for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edification of the body of Christ: that I may not be an unprofitable member of that holy communion, but may supply my portion of strength and nutriment to the whole body, for which I ever pray night and morning, and in all my holy offices, that it may grow up into the stature of perfectness, making continual edification of itself in love. Some I offend whom I would fain not offend, if not offending them I might please the Lord Jesus Christ. But when His displeasure is to be avoided, I must hate father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, and my own life also. The time is short, I fear the Church's long period of the reprieve is about run out. I apprehend that the truce is about concluded, and that the Lord is about to commence hostilities again. And I am a worthless man, and have been an unworthy servant, and now that He hath taught me how near at hand is His day, I do well to labour diligently, that I may be found of Him in peace. And oh, my friends, hear, hear, hear, that word of warning which standeth next before that judgment which endeth all; "Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." Yea, so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

CONCLUSION.

Few words will serve to confirm the prophecy of this epistle, by the history of Smyrna, the seat of this Church. After enduring more than its share of the first ten persecutions, this city, which was wont to be styled the lovely, the crown of Ionia, the ornament of Asia, began about the year 1084, to be cast into the furnace of Mohammedan desolation, in which it hath continued unto this day. The same Turkish pirate, referred to in our sketch of the Ephesian Church, got possession of it; and, in its rescue out of his hands,

besides the loss sustained in regular war, 10,000 of its people were massacred, to revenge the death of one man. And such were the effects of these ravages, that in the year 1106, the Greek emperor commissioned one to go and endeavour to restore the desolated coast from Smyrna to Attalia; and in the beginning of the next century, when the Acropolis was repaired by John Comnenus, the Greek emperor, the city remained an uninhabited ruin. It was in its grave, and the Church also seemed to be in its grave. From that time forward, it was the object of continual conflict between the Sultans and the Latins, assisted by the knights of Rhodes, who kept a lodgment for Christianity there, till the year 1402, when Tamerlane besieged it and took it, and slaughtered the people, and expelled the Christian knights. All hope seemed now for ever lost to Christianity there; but there was a word upon it from Him "which was dead and is alive," and behold at this day there are in it more Christian churches than in any city of the East. It is the seat both of a Greek and an Armenian archbishop; and of three orders of monks, Franciscans, Capuchins, and Jesuits. There are both an English and a Dutch chapel. And it is further to be observed, that from the time of the researches of Dr Smith in the year 1671, down to the book published last year on the subject of the Seven Churches, almost all our information hath come from persons resident in that city, and proceeding in their researches from thence. And at present it is the rallying point of all the missionary labours in that quarter: from which any re-awakening life hath its source. These things are most worthy to be noticed, as confirming all the truth of the prophecy contained in this epistle; and also all the lessons which we have endeavoured to draw from it for the use of those churches which may be found under the same circumstances of trial. As the former epistle teacheth us that decay of first love will certainly consume the most flourishing Church upon the earth; this teacheth us, that no outward persecutions can overcome the hope of the most unnoticed and unknown, as of Smyrna, of which there is not even a mention in the Scriptures of the New Testament. Moreover it confirms the truth, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; and that persecution is the furnace in which the gold is proved, but not a grain of it lost. May God preserve His Church in Britain, and Britain for His Church, as He hath preserved Smyrna. Amen, amen.

LECTURE VI.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS.

REV. ii. 12–17.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

THE view which I have given of these epistles, considered in general, is, that in them is exhibited the constitution of true Christian churches under Christ the chief Shepherd invisible, and the visible representatives of Him, called angels, for the ministry of word and of sacrament, held together by the one Spirit of Christ in all love and obedience, and preserved amongst the nations to hold up, in the midst of darkness and cruelty, and all temptation, the true and faithful name of God, to the end that men may believe thereon, and be saved from the wrath to come. Wherein, as in so many seed-beds, prepared with all good culture, might be sown the seed of the kingdom, and the children of the kingdom might grow up, and testify to the Father's love to His creatures, though apostate, Christ's power to reclaim and sanctify the chief of sinners; that all men, having a continual and abiding proof of the promise fulfilled, may be left without all manner of excuse, if they do not come unto God, and be in like manner recovered from the misery and bondage of prodigal outcasts,

into the adoption and liberty of the sons of God. Witnesses to the power of Christ in the Spirit, are these churches, as the Jews are witnesses to His power in the word; we, the proof of His supremacy over spiritual wickednesses,—they, the proof of His providence over the nations of the earth; both together, of His lordship over all things which God hath created and made; forasmuch as though the spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places have sought to corrupt us, and the rulers of the darkness of this world to destroy them, like the burning bush we are never consumed, are preserved by Christ's Spirit and providence, by His power and sovereignty over things visible and things invisible. When Jehovah made a covenant with the people of the former dispensation, it began by setting forth the holy constitution of law and government, and religion, under which they should live, (Exod. xx.–xxiii.,) by which they might be judged, and to which they might reduce themselves, in all after periods of their history: so judge I, that in this prophetic history of the people of the New Testament, through all their errors and apostasies, there is set forth, in the first place, the nature and constitution, the privileges and obligations, of that society or fellowship which He wisheth His Church to hold by, and if they be seduced away, thereto to return with all carefulness, lest He come and visit them with His wrath and indignation. In no lower a place do I set these seven epistles, than as the constitutional charter of the chosen generation and royal priesthood, and holy nation, and peculiar people of God; by which all canon law, codes of discipline, acts of ecclesiastical judicatories should guide themselves, and according to which they shall all be tried by the Great Head of the Church.

Next, as a constituent part of the revelation of Jesus Christ, these epistles are entitled to the most exact consideration. They exhibit Christ as the Head of the Church, the Father of the chosen seed, who, by means of the ordinances, doth feed and nourish up to manhood all those to whom God the Father giveth faith in His name. They present Him as the great Vine of life, nourishing fruitful branches in the midst of storms, and perils, and persecutions of many generations. They show the Church as a substantial and essential part of the divine purpose and decree, against which the gates of hell are not able to prevail; which persevereth, though all the world be set against it. And by this superiority to a world's temptations, by this union with Christ, maintained against a world's distractions, not only is the supernatural character of the Church demonstrated, but likewise the divine character and power of that Holy Spirit who preserves the union between Christ and His people against all powers in creation. For that which prevails against all

creation, must be the Creator, the very Creator himself. As the person sustaining our weak and wicked nature in full communion of holiness and will with God, is proved to be one with God; so He, maintaining the union of the Church with Christ, against all diabolical and worldly attempts, is proved likewise to be God. The incarnation and resurrection of Christ proved Him to be God, the preservation of a Church in the midst of a persecuting world, proves the Holy Ghost to be God: and the manner of the proof in both cases is the same. That which can withstand and overcome the creation, must be no less than the Creator, who is God. In this divine work of maintaining a Church united to Christ, in despite of a confederate conflicting world of wicked spirits and wicked men, Christ himself is the worker. He it is who from Himself, as from the heart and head of power, shoots forth the circulating stream of vital holiness and supernatural strength, which maintains their most wondrous life in the midst of so many deaths. Upon His flesh and blood they are fed, and they live by Him, as He, in the days of His flesh, lived by the Father. This supernatural, this divine work of gainsaying creation's evil mind, and withstanding creation's utmost violence, as it is acted by Christ, proveth Him to be Lord of creation, its Controller, and its Redeemer, and its Saviour; while the express limitation of bodily place and human power, to which by incarnation He hath restricted Himself, doth require that the Holy Ghost, by whose service He thus pervades all place, and resists all evil, and sustains a perpetual Church in the midst of a wicked and rebellious world, must be Himself a Divine and Almighty person, one with the Creator—the Creator. The same advantage which God took of our mortal, sinful, and corrupt nature, to prove the Divinity of His Son, and His own Almighty grace in endowing it with holiness, and with power, and with life everlasting, hath He taken of a rebel world, in order to prove through the Church, the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and the Lordship of the man Christ Jesus, from whom the Holy Ghost proceedeth. Therefore it is, that throughout this book the nations and the kings of the earth are allowed to confederate against the Lord and His Anointed. Satan and the powers of darkness, death and sin, all cruelty and craftiness and delusive power of Paganism, subtle craftiness of Papacy, hard-heartedness, mockery, and ridicule of infidelity, are allowed to combine and work in all ways against the Lord's faithful ones, to the end that the antagonist power of the Spirit, and the Spirit's Director, the man Christ Jesus, may be manifested to be above creation, above all power, whether visible or invisible, which is the same as to manifest that it is altogether creative and divine. For I hold it as

an axiom, that what is above the creation, is the Creator; that what resists and overcomes the world, visible and invisible, is the power of God. And this surely is the way in which God proves His own Godhead by mighty acts, controlling wickedness, and bringing huge confederacies of evil to an untimely and disgraceful end, as when He destroyed Pharaoh and Sennacherib: and when He shall destroy evil, it is that "men may know that I am God:" "that my name may be exalted." And above all, when Antichrist is destroyed by the coming of Christ, in the day of His wrath, then "all nations shall come and worship before Him, for His judgments are made manifest," (Rev. xv. 4.)

Thirdly: These epistles ought to be contemplated as together forming a most important part in the structure of this book; whose plan cannot be studied, whose completeness cannot be understood, without them. We shall find, when we come to study the book of seals,—and indeed any one perusing the fifth seal can at once perceive it,—that the controversy which God hath with the earth is for the blood of His martyrs. The same is manifest with respect to His dealings with Babylon, in whom is found the blood of martyrs and of all that were slain upon the earth: and when the kings of the earth have been set aside from their offices of regiment, those who succeed unto the vacant thrones are these same martyrs. The groundwork and, as it were, mainspring of the whole action is, therefore, the martyrdom of Christ's faithful ones, who are ever and in every place found upon the earth. Whence the question ariseth, Where is there any account of these martyrs, or of the provisions of God for their being reared up in continual supply for this fierce and consuming battle which their enemies are continually waging against them? The answer is given by pointing to these epistles. Here is the provision for rearing up the army of martyrs. These seven churches are the nurseries of those hardy soldiers of God and of Christ. Hence issue those mighty men of war, those soldiers of righteousness, those champions of the cross. Therefore it is spoke to every one of them by the Spirit in the language of battle and victory, "To him that overcometh;" and by the same Spirit are held out promises which come into accomplishment against the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ; honourable titles and high places in the kingdom of the Son of man. But the Captain-general of the host is Christ himself, who appears at the head of the vision, with that same sword proceeding out of His mouth with which He slays all His enemies in the end of the day of wrath. And His captains subordinate are the angels of the churches, through whom He ministers the food of everlasting life, by which they are able to triumph

over all the defiances and deaths of the enemy. Being seen in this light, these epistles stand out as occupying the most noble place in this glorious structure built for the testimony of Jesus Christ;—as not of any private interpretation; as not of any local or temporary application; as not of numerical limitation to any seven churches, but, according to our doctrine taught from the beginning, as containing a constant and abiding, a uniform and universal, action of Christ in the world, unto the end of producing and reproducing those faithful witnesses, through whom the glory of the Lord may be manifested in the sight of all men, and the battles of the Lord waged with the unbelieving world. It is the first scene in the great drama, wherein is exhibited that domestic and heavenly condition of peace and holiness, that righteous discipline and administration of pure and blessed truth; whereon the invader comes like a flood to destroy it; into which he insinuates errors and deceptions, to betray and seduce it into all sorts of wickedness; but though cruelly he rageth with much bloodshed, and most cunningly he mimics and mocks the truth; yet nought prevaileth he to mislead or to terrify any one of God's elect, and Christ's flock: who come through the long and laborious conflict of thousands of years with an unbroken line of conflict, until at length they reap the victory in the battle of Armageddon, the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and wear the bright honours of the first resurrection, and rear upon the earth the trophies of blessed and righteous government for ever and ever,—of glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will among men.

Fourthly: While these are the views which I have been working with in the interpretation of the two preceding epistles, I have lately begun to suspect that, in order to arrive at the completeness of the idea, there is yet another view necessary to be taken, which is that of succession—a succession, however, rather in form and condition, than in precise and exact eras of time; such a succession, for example, as in the beast is signified by the seven heads. To this suspicion I have been led by the growing evidence of my own interpretations; and in the principle of it I have been confirmed by a most able paper upon the subject in the sixth number of the *Morning Watch*. What the details of that most able writer's interpretation are, I know but very imperfectly, or rather, not at all: and I am the better pleased to work out my own conviction, that the truth may be confirmed in the mouth of two witnesses, and that I may not be overswayed by the great force and power of reason which appear in the author of that paper. The idea which I have got is, that Satan presenteth himself under

seven forms of temptation to the Church, one after the other; which gives occasion to our living Head to offer to the Church a sevenfold form of instruction and warning and hope. The first temptation is, decline of love; the second is, persecution and death; the third is, amalgamation with the world, and chastisement, that they may not be destroyed with the wicked; the fourth is, the licence of the mother of harlots; the fifth is, the formality of a name; the sixth is, great weakness, "little strength," together with the opposition of false brethren; the seventh is, self-sufficiency and vain-glory. Appropriate to these seven forms of Antichrist in the Church are seven forms of Christ the good Shepherd, and of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, in the knowledge and faith of which the saints may be strengthened to overcome. Now, that the seven churches were exactly in the conditions set forth in these seven instructions, I nothing doubt; and I believe that these seven, rather than any others, were chosen of very purpose of being patterns to all the churches which then were or thereafter should be, and so as to exhibit in their variety all the possible varieties of condition into which any and every Church of Christ can possibly be brought: to the end that every Church and every angel looking thereunto might see their own temptations, warnings, and means of deliverance. But, besides this, I am inclined also to believe that in these seven churches are exhibited seven states into which the Church should be brought throughout all the period of its history,—seven progressive conditions of trials through which it should pass,—together with the seven forms of the Spirit, in the strength of which it should prevail until the day of redemption. This view of the epistles I have been slow to admit, being possessed with the three important views of them given above; but it has been strongly borne in upon my mind by many coincidences, which were not to be explained as accidental; and perceiving that this additional bearing did in no way subvert those other principles which I have on sure grounds established, but did rather come in as further trial and confirmation of them, I have given a more patient consideration to it, and am now very much disposed to take it in along with the rest. To explain it as it now appears at present to me, I must cast a glance backward upon the two former epistles.

The first is of the Great Bishop's carefulness, containing an invocation of the shepherds not to decline from their first love, and of the flock to be assured of an heavenly pasture. Now, if I err not, this will take in the period during which the various flocks were gathering out of the nations under their various shepherds, overseen and intended by the good Shepherd himself, who gave His life for

the sheep,—a period which we must begin from the day of Pentecost, and continue till the next period sets in, which we shall be in a better case to determine, when we shall have considered what that second period is. This is evidently the period of persecution unto the death, of the ten days or periods of persecution, that state of the Church to which Christ presents Himself as the Resurrection and the Life, and the Spirit as the Preserver from the second death. Now, this period of waste, and tribulation, and poverty, and death, began from Nero's time, and ended with that of Constantine. This would determine the Ephesian period to be the lifetime of the apostles, the times of Paul and Peter and James, and the other disciples of the Lord, through whom the gospel was preached and the churches planted over the whole Roman empire, as Paul himself declares: "Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world," (Rom. x. 18.) This is the period of primitive love and increase of the flock through love and carefulness; and the next period, which is introduced by reason of the decline of the first love, is the season of persecution and death. These periods may also be realised by the forms of the wickedness or temptation whereof the first, that of the Nicolaitanes, is, as we have seen, sensuality; and the second is Judaising, or falling away to the pomp and circumstance and splendour of the former dispensation. How much this spirit took hold of the Church during the centuries of persecution, any one conversant with the ecclesiastical history of those times well knows. For though the Ebionites were cast out as heretics, this did not prevent the leaven of ancient formalities from introducing itself. The third epistle is not of death by martyrdom, but of judgment by the sword, wherein the Head of the Church should be known not as a supporter under the stroke of the executioner, but as the executioner Himself, wherein the churches should not be in general faithful to His name, but, because of their corruptness, should be visited with the judgment of the sword, cutting off the fair and costly shows which they were making in the flesh, that the spirit might be saved, visiting with fierce judgments upon those things in which they gloried, that they might be taught to glory only in the Lord. This period, joining to the other, must set in with Constantine, and continue till all the churches were laid waste by the sword of the barbarians, which brings us down to the time of Charlemagne, or rather of his father, when the sword of the barbarous nations was sheathed, both in the East and in the West, and a new form of the Church began to come into being and activity. The Lombards, last of a terrible succession in the West, and the Saracens, last also of the

scourges in the East, (for the Turk brought death to the Church, whereas this epistle concerneth only chastisement,) came to their end by the same instrumentality of Charles Martel, the father of Charlemagne. This period includes five centuries, (from 300 to 800,) during the last three of which the papacy was changing the form of the Church, and preparing that aspect of it to which the fourth epistle is addressed. This period also may be recognised in its temptations, which are a priesthood making gain of godliness, as Balaam did, and introducing into the Christian Church the abominations of the heathen, together with the sensuality of the Nicolaitanes: and the faithful opposer of their errors is called Antipas, whose personality, as one of the Church of Pergamos, we do in nothing question, while at the same time we look at his name, "against all," as casting light upon the period in question,—during which, in the midst of the weakness brought on by the sword of God, the pope reared his head and stood forth in that greatness of strength in which we find him at the re-constitution of the empire in the person of Charlemagne.

Having opened the succession of these three, it would be premature to follow out the remaining four, which will come in their proper place: suffice it to say, that Thyatira, the fourth, is the Church under the seduction of Jezebel, or the whore of Babylon, whose threatening is not chastisement but death. Sardis, the fifth, is the Church under the temptation of nominal orthodoxy, in which we and our fathers have long been living, "having a name to live." Philadelphia, the sixth, is a state of the Church just coming into being, which receiveth fulness of love, and with it completeness of deliverance. And Laodicea is the last stage of the Church, upon whose deep sleep the Lord shall descend like an armed man.

If this succession can be established, which will appear in the sequel, this advantage will be gained;—namely, that the basis of fact will lie not only in those seven churches, of which almost all memorial is passed away, but in the great outlines of Church history which can never perish; while the vision will come to have a prophetical and historical character, as well as a real and universal one. Still, however, as a constituent part of the book, it will stand as the record of the things that are; while, as a portion of the divine revelation, it will occupy the chief place as a system of catholic instruction in canonical and ecclesiastical jurisprudence. The things which we have already taught remain the same; and this one thing is added, that the epistles have also a bearing upon, and an application to, seven successive conditions of the Church in her warfare against Antichrist.

Such being our view of this first vision of Christ and section of this book, we go about to explain it as containing the milk of valour, and the seed of martyrdom, the precepts of the Christian warfare, the hopes of the Christian champion, and the rewards of his painful service. All things else which we touch are but subsidiary, and, as it were, by the way; for example, whether the constitutions of these churches answer better to the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Independent platform reared in this island, is a mere fragment of the subject, on which I would not spend any great attention or labour, and have not; for all that I have said on this topic is to maintain this great principle, That the angel of any Church, he who is the messenger and internuncio between them and Christ, is free to go to Christ without any interference whatever, and to fetch from Him plenty for all his flock: that no presbytery, no bishop, nor pope, nor devil, no, nor angel, may dare to intrude between the man who ministers in word and ordinances and the Head of the Church, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Here is the common ground on which the churches in this land meet, whether they be Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Independent. For I know it to be the constitution of the Church of Scotland, and I understand it to be the constitution of the Church of England, that when a minister hath received his ordination over a flock, he is expected to act there with a view to Christ only, to His glory only; and the less occasion they have to meddle with him, the better they account of him, the better soldier they esteem him. Nay more, they expect it of him to lie open to all truth, to draw largely upon the great source of the supply, and to make known for the whole Church whatever profit he makes beyond his brethren. And the Church expects of her ministers to help on the work of perfecting her in all sound doctrine and holy discipline. It is a totally incorrect idea of Church creeds and canons, that they are boundaries to the living spirit of the Church, saying evermore, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further: and equally false is it to set them down as a standard of infallibility ever saying, This is right, and whatever contravenes this is certainly wrong. He who thus uses the creeds and canons of the Church makes an idol of them, and grieves the Spirit of Christ, and of the holy men who framed them for the good use of testifying against the errors that they saw around them, to the best of their ability, without dreaming that they also were not liable to err. For the purpose of giving every angel of the Church his true standing, as the perpetual passer between Christ and His people, free as the air which he breathes, and full, full of confidence in his Divine Teacher; this standing to make good for myself and for all ministers of truth, that

they may not be hand-fastened nor foot-bound by all the necessary or unnecessary creeds and canons of the Church: this is the reason why I have gone into these questions;—for the common good of ministers, and through them of their flocks, not for the magnifying of any particular form of Church government, or for justifying the ordinance of Established churches, which, though important questions in their place, are beside our present subject, and far beneath our present aim.

Having thus recollected, and a little added to, our general idea of these seven epistles, we now proceed to open, according to our common method, that which was written for the Church of Pergamos; premising merely in this place, that this was the chief city of Mysia, and the residence of the Attalian kings, distant from Smyrna about sixty miles towards the north; being still a town of some consequence, with a population of about 15,000, and having in it two Christian Churches, and nine or ten Mohammedan mosques. In another part of the epistle, our attention is called to its irreligious character, and that will be the place to introduce any historical notices which remain of it. Meanwhile we proceed, according to our method, to treat, first, of the style which Christ chooseth for Himself in speaking to them.

THE EPISTLE TO PERGAMOS—CHRIST'S STYLE.

"These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." This is a very different style from the two preceding, adopted towards the Churches of Ephesus and Smyrna; whereof the former imported pastoral watchfulness and security, the latter omnipresent and omnipotent life, to sustain under persecutions, and to overcome the power of death: but this now before us brings our tender and merciful Shepherd into view, with weapons of war, sharp and two-edged, with which He threatens some, that if they repent not, He will "come quickly, and will fight against them." So at times appears the Shepherd amongst His flock, with the instruments of death to cut off such as are visited with a pestilent disease, that the others be not infected; so also sometimes comes the vine-dresser, not with his pruning-hook, to clear the branches from encumbrance, but with his axe in hand to lop away such as have from any cause become utterly unfruitful: and so also into the bosom of the sweetest, happiest family, is the chirurgeon with his instruments welcomed; and by no one so much as by the poor patient distracted with suffering, which nothing but the knife can cure, haply worn down with the gnawing pain of toothache, or threatened with death by the fast-spreading gangrene of some incurable member. Yet not

His first nor His second approach maketh our blessed Lord in this more severe, though not less loving aspect, but the third time, when neither the authority and care of the good Shepherd nor the assurance of death's Conqueror have availed to preserve His Church in purity from the temptations of the wicked. Then, lest, for want of timely correction, He should lose His dear-bought and well-beloved children, He appears amongst them with the emblems of chastisement, and of destruction, in order to enforce the word which He is about to utter; and wishing now to be listened to as well by the fear as by the affection and trust of the Church, He speaketh in the character of the Judge and the Avenger, saying, "These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges."

We have already, in our third lecture, ascertained the import of this symbol to be, not conversion, as some, from the circumstance of its going forth from the mouth would fain seduce themselves to believe, but chastisement, even unto cutting off and destruction, as is evidenced in the battle of the Lamb against the beast, where the sword is called into use, (xix. 15,) to slay all the enemies of the Lord, who had not been taken alive and cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone; and as to the circumstance of its proceeding out of His mouth, it betokeneth the destruction to proceed from word, from breath of speech, from "saying, and it is done;" as it is written, (Hos. vi. 6,) "I have hewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth:" and again, (Isa. xi. 4,) "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Without repeating what hath been there set forth concerning the certain meaning of this symbol, we proceed now, according to our method, to gather from the other Scriptures light around this name and style of our great Bishop, and to hold it up in due prominency, right proportions, and proper application, before the Church, especially in this our day and generation, the vineyard that we are specially called upon to keep.

It hath been one of the sweetest recreations of my soul, in the midst of these pious labours, to search the Scripture for the origin of those names, figures, and symbols, which are used in the Apocalypse: and in no case hath this been attended with more edification than in the case of the sword proceeding out of Messiah's mouth; which carries our attention at once to the 49th chapter of the Prophecies of Isaiah, where is found the original of this symbol in these words:—"The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his

hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Where, by means of the two similitudes of the sword and the polished shaft, a fuller idea is conveyed than in the text itself: the former pointing out the origin of all judgments in the word of Messiah's mouth, the latter pointing out the effect of these words in the hearts of the King's enemies: for as the sword declares the strength of him who useth it, the arrow declares the destruction of him who receiveth it into his bosom. This text doth further declare, that for a season after Messiah's mouth had been thus endowed with all power in heaven and in earth, and all judgment given unto His hand, because he is the Son of man, He was to be hidden in the shadow of Jehovah's hand, and in His quiver laid up in store; until the day of grace and salvation should have run out its appointed term, and He shall come to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, in which the wicked one shall be consumed with the breath of His mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming. And because He would have all men to know how very great and powerful, and how much sharper than a two-edged sword, is that word of His which now speaketh from heaven, and will then execute every jot and tittle of all which it hath spoken; He begins this, the sublimest strain of prophecy, with the annunciation of Himself as such, and in right of this superlative exaltation as God's avenger, He calleth upon all to give good ear to His words: "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from far." And to the effect it might be known that, as man, and the Son of man, He had received and would yet execute the judgment, He addeth, "Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name." And from this place forward to the conclusion of the prophet, that is, throughout seventeen chapters, we have a series of words spoken by the Judge of all the earth, to the Jews and to the Gentiles; to those that fear God, and to those who fear Him not, concluding with these words: "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many," (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16.) And so in the Apocalypse, Christ appeareth first with the sword proceeding from His mouth, (i. 16,) and declareth Himself by this name unto His Church in this third epistle, and this done, hideth Himself for a long season in the quiver of God, until, in the great crisis and consummation, He reappears "to judge and make war," (xix. 11,) and to plead with all flesh by fire and sword;

by fire against the beast and false prophet, by sword against the remnant who had dared to array themselves against the Lamb, and those that are with Him, who are "called and faithful and chosen." Whosoever will turn these things in his mind must be convinced that great light should be cast upon Christ's action as the swordsman, from studying these chapters of our prophet; which might well be denominated the Revelation of Jesus Christ unto the Jew.

I do not propose to myself in this place such a weighty task as to give a particular account of the substance of that glorious revelation of Jesus Christ; but only to derive from it light upon the style or designation which He assumeth to Himself in the passage before us. But it may be said, What evidence is there that the last seventeen chapters of Isaiah are indeed one strain of prophecy? The same evidence as there is that the whole Book of Revelation concerneth that one person who appeareth in the first chapter in such symbolical raiment, as being taken piecemeal, might afford the means of identifying Him throughout the various scenes and actions of the book. So in the first few verses of the 49th chapter, such characteristics are put upon Him as enable us to recognise the same person everywhere in the following chapters. There are, first, His being from the womb called and named of God, and fitted for His work, (ver. 1;) the second is, the office to which He was called, "to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him," (ver. 5;) "His servant Israel in whom He would be glorified," (ver. 3;) the third is, His failure the first time in this service; "I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God," (ver. 4;) "though Israel be not gathered," (ver. 5;) the fourth is, His being hidden for a season with God after He had received His power and glory, and abiding there till the times of the Father be accomplished, (ver. 2;) the fifth is, His being in the meantime, while He is despised and abhorred of the nations, given as a light to the Gentiles; for the apostle positively refers the acceptable time and the day of salvation of verse 8 to the present dispensation of the Gentiles, (2 Cor. vi. 2;) and the last is, His being preserved safe until the time when Jehovah shall give Him for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, and to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, to say to the prisoners, Go forth, &c., which is the restoration of Israel, and in them the blessedness of the whole earth. Now, let any one take these six features of Messiah, and, with them in his mind, read the chapters which follow, and he will find how they are bound together and most closely interwoven in all their parts. The 49th chapter is like an epitome of the whole series; which together forms a glorious discourse upon these the pur-

poses of God for revealing His great and holy name, and justifying the goodness of His acts by Israel His servant. The 50th chapter assigns for the reason of their being cast off, that they had rejected Him when He came and spake unto them wisdom, and preached unto them comfort, (ver. 4,) nor would obey the voice of Him whom God had chosen for His servant, (ver. 10.) This chapter is good against the deniers of Christ's weak humanity, of His living by faith, and being taught of the Father; and by the Father exalted; who are so full of His Godhead, or affect to be so jealous of it, that they will not look at His manhood, or listen to any one who speaks of it: let them listen to the Prophet Isaiah, or the Holy Ghost speaking by him in the 50th chapter of his prophecy. The 51st and 52d chapters contain a various discourse from the mouth of Messiah to the people that follow after righteousness, and claim Abraham for their father, and Sarah for their mother, into the fellowship of whose inheritance we are entered by faith (Gal. iii. 14;) and the 53d, including the last three verses of the 52d, refers the glory of the work accomplished for Zion to Him who is God's servant, (lii. 13; liii. 11;) and the 54th chapter makes His blessedness for ever sure. These four chapters are a song of loves, containing, first, the cause of the temporary separation of Messiah from His beloved Zion, (l. 1;) then her lamentable case, yet certain safety, during her alienation, (li. 16;) then her adorning as a bride for her bridegroom, (lii. 1;) and her redemption without price, (ver. 3;) and safe settlement in her inheritance, (ver. 11.) Upon which the strain changes as to its person, but not as to its subject; from the Church to her husband, from Rachel the wife to Israel the servant of many labours; and recounts the consummate wisdom and love with which He had won for Himself and His beloved one such glory on the earth. (lii. 13; liii. 12.) The love, the devoted love of the bridegroom having thus been sung, behold, in chapter liv. the blessedness of the marriage, her fruitfulness, (ver. 1,) the rank of her husband, (ver. 5,) His eternal love and faithfulness, (ver. 6–10,) the blessedness of her children, (ver. 11, 15,) the destruction of all who rise up against her for ever and ever, (ver. 15–17.) No one can doubt that these four chapters are constructed upon the principle of the marriage between Christ and His Church, and that chap. liii., so much and so deservedly prized, is the account of what lowliness Christ submits to in order to win the beloved of His heart. Indeed the very outset of the prophecy in chap. xlix. shows it to be constructed upon the symbolical history of Jacob of Israel serving for his beloved one, and after a period of service finding himself disappointed of her by the will of the father. Now behold how leading an idea in

the Revelation is this same symbol of the marriage which not only is presented as the consummation, from chap. xix. to the end, but is indeed prepared for throughout the whole progress of the story; for example, in the next epistle, by the promise of sitting with Him on His throne, and in the next again by the promise of the white raiment, and in the fifth seal by the gift of that bridal attire; while it is also set out by the contrast of Babylon the harlot, which being removed, straightway the faithful and chaste spouse cometh with Christ her husband, to rule the world. But first (xix. 11) she must come along with Him to the battle; and take part in the action of the sword; which is preliminary to the marriage and coronation and government. This order hath no similitude in the world, since chivalry ceased; but of all chivalry it is the foundation. The future husband first acts the soldier, to deliver his captive princess, and the young knight enters into battle with some love-token from the lady of his heart, to animate him to noble deeds; and fair ladies were wont to look on and behold the prowess of their champions, and were oft proposed as the prize of battle;—all this, I say, hath its origin in the fruitful idea of Christ the Redeemer of His Church, which comes with Him, yea and calls upon Him to go forth (Psalm xlv.) as the champion of her meekness and gentleness and truth. Some may make light of such allusions to a state of society which is now wont to be very much despised; I would there were something worthy to be compared with it in these sinful days. It is not however the abuses which I have to do with, but the idea; and how just, how pure, how noble that was, and how congenial to the highest faculties of reason, let the works of poetry and the deeds of valour which it hath inspired testify. But whether the illustration of chivalry be admitted or not, the idea of Christ redeeming His dispossessed and captive Church out of the house of bondage, and then bringing her with Him as His betrothed bride, to witness the destruction of His enemies, and to possess along with Him the inheritance which they had usurped, is the true one. This much, therefore, we gather from the examination of these chapters of Isaiah, drawn into comparison with the 45th Psalm, and the Book of Revelation, that the sword with two edges belongs to Him as the champion of the Church, of the meek and lowly Church against her proud and cruel oppressors. That it characterises Him as the man of war, who shall yet by war make war to cease unto the ends of the earth, (Psalm xlvi.)

The examination of the remaining chapters of Isaiah casts still stronger light upon this designation of our Redeemer "as Him who hath the sharp sword with two edges." There is presented to us in

the 57th chapter the prophecy of the sorceress or the oppressor of the people of the Lord, out of whose hands they are delivered by the Redeemer, (lix. 20,) whereupon follows the glory of Israel in having righteous dominion over those Gentiles, by whom they had been oppressed. The 60th, 61st, 62d, and 63d chapters, contain a continual reference to this act of bringing the Gentiles by the edge of the sword, under the supremacy of the Jews: indeed, this idea as the action of the sword is given so far back as the song of Moses, (Deut. xxxii. 44;) where, after recounting the oppression of his people under the Gentiles, and chiding them for their unbelief as the cause of it all, the Lord gathereth wrath against the Gentiles and their false gods, saying thus: "If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy," (Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.) This passage, which contains both the sword and the arrows of the Lord, is the true origin of the symbolical raiment and action of the 45th Psalm, which represents Christ as coming in the character of His Father's and His people's avenger. As also it is of the symbols in the 49th chapter of Isaiah, and likewise of the day of vengeance, (Isa. lxi. 2;) as also of "the day of vengeance, and the year of my redeemed," (lxiii. 4.) This last passage is remarkably the action of the sword, being the same with the action of the 34th chapter, as we know by the use of the self-same language, (ver. 8,) "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompence for the controversies of Zion." Now the action of that chapter is expressly declared to be the action of the sword of the Lord: "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to judgment: the sword of the Lord is filled with blood," &c., (ver. 5.) And the 63d chapter refers to the Redeemer as coming from this slaughter of Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. And this action being accomplished of smiting the apostasy of Edom, the sword is drawn once more against all flesh: "For by fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many," (Isa. lxvi. 16.) From these researches, which might be extended to other parts of Scripture, we derive this most important conclusion, that the symbol of the sword by which Christ would be known to the Church of Pergamos, doth point Him out not merely as the executioner of the Father's anger in general, but also in particular as the executioner of that judgment which is to be brought upon the nations for their oppres-

sion of His people; the judgment I mean upon the quick, which is described at length in the 25th chapter of Matthew, from the 31st verse, where all the nations are tried by their treatment of His people, and judged accordingly. But no attribute of God or of Christ is understood aright by being merely understood historically, because these blessed persons are not in time subsistent, but the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Though, therefore, we have been at pains to gather the import of this attribute of Christ, symbolically expressed by the sword, by referring to the historical event of the judgment of the Gentiles in which it will be most remarkably illustrated, we now return with the information thus gathered, and say that our great Shepherd desireth the Church of Pergamos, and all other churches, to regard Him continually in the light of the Judge, as well as the Saviour of the Church. Shepherd as He is, good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, He bears a rod for chastisement, as well as a staff for defence, and a crook for pastoral care. True Vine though He is, and parent Stem of all the branches, and their continual sustenance and nourishment, He would have it to be understood that He also fulfilleth the part of the vine-dresser, which, though personally it belong to the Father, yet officially is it performed by Christ, into whose hands all judgment hath been committed by the Father. As Head of the Church, He would have it to be known that He doth execute regal authority as well as parental affection, priestly intercession, and prophetical counsel. That it is as much His prerogative to cut off the wicked from His house as to keep the righteous in safety; in one word, that discipline is as essential an attribute of Christ as is baptizing with the Holy Ghost, or feeding with His body and blood. And this out of love and unto salvation, destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord. Of discipline, therefore, we would say that this epistle entreateth, and to this as the informing and peculiar principle of it we will have respect in our interpretation.

THE EPISTLE—OF DISCIPLINE.

The epistle consisteth of three parts; the first, commendation; the second, censure; and the third, exhortation to repentance. I have already observed how constantly throughout these epistles commendation hath the lead of every other feeling; although some of the churches had arrived at as low a pass as can well be supposed. Even in the case before us, things were in so bad a condition that our good Shepherd presents Himself armed with His sharp two-edged sword, and departs with the announcement of prompt and speedy execution if they repent not, and yet He opens His mouth

with words of commendation. He sees it needful to bethink Himself, and to forewarn them of discipline; but still His love is the same unabated, grateful affection as ever, and doth express itself in cordial acknowledgment of the angel's good services in time past: one would say He almost pleadeth His apology, by twice over putting forth the peculiar hardships and temptations of His station. Can any clearer proof be given of the spirit of love in which discipline should be gone about? Can any more forcible command be given to the Church with what kindly and gentle words she should approach this ungenial part of her duty. And in the way in which censure and discipline are gone about, its willingness or unwillingness, we have a sure means of ascertaining whether Christ is present in those actings of His Church, or not. The Roman apostasy, fortified with hypocrisy at all points, understood this well, and practised it most dexterously in every case of discipline, however unjust and atrocious. Their feigned forms of the true spirit, we Protestants have been honest enough to set aside: let us beware whether we have not set aside the spirit also. If, for example, any court of the Church assemble to take cognisance of a brother's real or supposed fault, and approach the subject with rapid haste, break down the venerable forms of justice and charity, and burst out into bitter railings, and inflame themselves with violent speeches, until their assembly have more of the tempestuous sea or boiling whirlpool, than of calm deliberate judgment, or soothing pity and love; then what shall we say, but that this is not moved by the Spirit of Christ to the work of holy discipline, but driven on by the passion of anger and revenge? And what shall we expect to come forth from the boiling caldron of its rage,—the wisdom which cometh from above? I trow not. For that is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." What then? That, I fear, which is described by the Apostle James, in these words: "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work," (James iii. 14–16.)

The discipline of the Church may either become the instrument of the most hideous injustice and cruel oppression, as in the Church of Rome it became from the time of Dominick; or it may remain, what it was intended to be, the parent of union, the preserver against error, the blessed peacemaker amongst the brethren. Nor is it difficult to trace how it passeth over from the one extreme to the other. The Lord hath laid down the golden rule of discipline in

these words: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," (Matt. xviii. 15–17.) I will be bold to say, that wherever this rule is observed in the Spirit, there will be peace and harmony and love in the bosom of the Church; and discipline will be found, next to doctrine, to be the best gift of Heaven to men: but, on the other hand, when this rule fails to be observed, either in the letter or the spirit of it, discipline will become no better than a deadly weapon in the hands of the strong to oppress the weak, in the hands of the ungodly and hypocritical to put away the hateful reproofs of the godly and sincere, in the hands of those who love to be in darkness to hide and bury in oblivion the light of those whom God hath kindled. A rule it is of the most exquisite beauty and ample blessing, containing, first, an injunction when we feel offended in a brother on account of any of his ways and doings, whether affecting us or not, so that it affect the honour and glory of Him in whom we live, and for whom we ought to live, we should straightway, if we cannot forbear any longer, go to himself, or in some way or other communicate with him, break the matter to his own private ear, and deal with him as brother ought with brother, after a most tender and kindly sort; all with the view of gaining him over to God and goodness, without thought or threatening of further proceeding, in faith and hope of a happy termination, through the common Spirit of truth and love. But if God be pleased to try still further our faithfulness, and forbear His blessing of peace, we are, as the second step, required to take one or two along with us, and in their presence to set forth the grounds of the offence, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established;" that they may lend their help to convince the conscience of the brother who is thought to have erred: and if he have not erred, that in their hearing he may justify himself, and so in sweet conference the form and measure of the truth may be ascertained. But if in the face of their judgment the error or offence should be pertinaciously persisted in, we are then commanded to lay the whole matter before the Church, as the ultimate tribunal beyond which there is no higher upon the earth. To whose sentence, if he likewise prove refractory, then is he to be held as a heathen man and a publican, excommunicated from the fellowship,

and put forth from the blessed privileges of the Church; that he may know the misery of the howling wilderness which is without, and come as a humble penitent seeking to be restored to the protection and privileges, the security and salvation of the fold. Then, to give awful sanction to the Church's voice on earth, He adds these mighty words, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;"—words which have made emperors tremble upon their thrones, and which were intended to make all living men to reverence and stand in awe of the Church, as Christ's voice of truth and witness upon the earth, through whom He pronounceth the doom not of kings only, but of kingdoms, and of the earth itself, yea, and to the invisible potentates of heaven doth make known the manifold wisdom of God. So much the more careful ought the Church to be in giving judgment: so much the more reverent ought we to be of the judgments which she giveth. And, seeing the issues of her judgment-seat are so awful, so much the more solicitous to prevent the interference of so terrible a tribunal, and to conciliate differences in these earlier stages by secret communion between ourselves, or private conference in the presence of one or two witnesses. To which also the Lord leads us on by the promise of a wonderful blessing upon concord and concurrence between brother and brother; no less a blessing than that of receiving whatever they shall ask of Heaven: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is n heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," (Matt. xviii. 19, 20.)

It is very delightful to study this, the golden rule of discipline, upon which all forms of process against any member of the Church must, and in our Church do, rest: experience hath taught me that there is in the practice of it a very great reward, and that it generally succeeds in restoring those who have erred from the truth. How painful to see it so trampled under foot in these days of high pretensions, so invariably departed from by those who are loudest in their professions, and holiest in the names which they have appropriated to themselves! Do they deem a brother to have erred in any point of doctrine, or come short in any point of duty, they give their first notice of it in some of their publications circulating over the whole earth: and to his astonishment he finds himself dilated over all Christendom as a vile and worthless person, without knowing wherefore, without having heard one word of explanation, one ounsel of wisdom, one entreaty of love. Then it becomes the sub-

ject of universal conversation, misrepresentation, and accusation; and, after it hath been ripened by much busy hatching of others, it becomes the subject of conversation, debate, and inquiry in the courts of the Church, haply without one solitary minister or elder having sought by personal conference either to know the truth of the things asserted, or to recover their brother to the way of godliness, if so be that he hath erred. And thus inflated with windy rumour, thus inflamed with popular heats, they clamour for justice against the offender, who all the while knows not wherein his offence consisteth, and is stunned with the hideous errors which are imputed to him, and which most likely exist nowhere but in the malicious bosoms of the anonymous defamer who first raised the hue and cry against an unoffending man, wresting his words, deforming his opinions, and skilfully seeking to overthrow his good name and influence in the Church. When the discipline of the Church comes thus to be administered, it is as bad as the Inquisition, with which it hath many things in common; such as, a hidden accuser, torture of the most exquisite kind which words can inflict before judgment, loss of everything which is dear to the innocent before trial is begun. Ah me! what a thing this is! But there is a thing more evil and portentous still; which is, the sympathy felt with the secret and malicious accuser. It has stung me almost beyond endurance, to find the willingness with which an evil report is entertained, and the part that is taken with the publishers of it: though they present neither name, nor argument, nor evidence of any sort: though in the doing of it there may be the grossest calumny, the most malicious spirit, the most wanton cruelty, and the most indecent levity. Woe is me! what a pass discipline is come to! It makes me tremble! I count it an especial privilege that in this state of things, and especially after what I have witnessed in the Church these last few months, I should be called upon, in the course of Providence, to open that epistle of our great Bishop which treats of discipline. God give me the words of the wise, and the spirit of the faithful witnesses of God.

PERGAMOS—SATAN'S SEAT.

"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is."—The city of Pergamos arose into metropolitan dignity more than three centuries before the Christian era, by the treachery of the treasurer of Lysimachus, who, carrying hither great wealth, founded the dynasty of the Attalian kings, which continued to subsist for nearly two centuries, when the last of them made over his treasure and his kingdom to the Romans. Besides its celebrity for great

wealth it also bore the palm among the cities of Asia for its magnificent library, second only to that of the Ptolemies in Alexandria. Its situation is in the midst of a most fertile valley, whose very fertility inclines the people to indolence and ease. These causes together, wealth, luxury, and learning, had, it is likely, acquired for it the bad pre-eminence which it hath given to it in the text, as Satan's Seat. I have not been able to find any more distinct ground in history for this characteristic twice over given to it in the epistle. The wealth of the Attalian kings was proverbial amongst the Romans; and the fulness and indolence of the people, from the exceeding richness of the country round, is observed by travellers. Sir Paul Recault's description brought forcibly to my mind the prophet's description of Samaria: "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine," (Isa. xxviii. 1.) They were so devoted to their library that when the Ptolemies, out of envy, introduced the exportation of papyrus to write upon, they invented parchment; which to this day in the Latin language bears the name of their city. Now we know on which side the learning of those days arrayed itself, the philosophy, the fables, and the vain janglings. "Not many wise, not many noble are called." A proof of the greater intensity of their hatred to the gospel is given in the next topic of the epistle, where honourable mention is made of one who had already suffered martyrdom there; a state of things not realised in any other of the epistles. But whether there were any traces in history or not, we may not doubt, having the word of God for it, that Pergamos was well entitled to the characteristic of the text, "where Satan's seat is," "where Satan dwelleth."

If again we take up the notion laid down above of a reality in succession, as well as a reality in place, being proper to these epistles, and upon the principles there given assign to Pergamos the period from the "ten days of persecution" proper to Sardis, onward till Jezebel, the mother of harlots, obtained the sway, we have indeed a most appropriate and significant interpretation of this word; because then in very truth was the Church taken into the bosom of Rome, and exalted on high beside the imperial throne, which were the city and seat of Satan. This is accurately determined in the 13th chapter of this book, which contains the vision of the Papal Roman Empire, where it is said, (ver. 2,) "And the dragon gave him his power, and HIS SEAT, and great authority." Now "the dragon" is identified with "the devil" in chap. xii. 9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan." Moreover the seat of the whore, who is confederate in place and action

with the beast, riding upon him and doing miracles before him, is declared to be "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth;" also, "the seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman sitteth," (xvii. 9, 18.) Rome, therefore, beyond a question, is the "seat of Satan;" and the time during which it was his seat is the time before he gave it up to the beast, the time antecedent to the Papal supremacy, when the symbol of chap. xiii. began to come into being,—that is, from the age of Constantine, when Christianity became the religion of imperial Rome, until the time of Justinian, when the Papacy was hatched, and from which its life is reckoned; or rather until the time of Charlemagne, when it came into full development of its power and energy. How great a temptation her establishment by the civil power became to the Church has been so obvious to all men, that not a few, led away by the manifest corruptions which followed, have gone astray into the error that these were owing to that imperial act, and that every establishment is a wicked thing. If these men would a little more diligently go into the examination of the Church's corruptions, they would find them to be all of an older date than the time of Constantine; kept under, indeed, by the oppressive hand of power, "prevented from revealing themselves by Him who letteth," but ready to burst forth whenever occasion should be presented. This we shall have ample occasion to show when we come to treat of the seals. Meanwhile, as there exists such a fearful error upon the duties of kings to establish the Christian religion within their dominions, we think it not amiss in this place to make a brief extract, containing the argument upon this subject which we have exhibited in our work on the responsibility of the Church and State to God and to one another.

"I do not mean by this to impugn the act of Constantine in establishing the Church, which I believe to have been the beginning of God's actings against the enemies of Christ, whereof the first was paganism; and therefore I do the rather devoutly contemplate it, as the first great achievement of our King. A hard thing indeed it were, and most unbeseeming royal dignity and power, if a king might not in his estate do that which any nobleman or master doth in his, when he says, that all his servants shall fear the Lord, observe the ordinances of His worship, keep holy the Sabbath, and walk according to His precepts and commandments. And a very foolish and wicked thing were it, for me, or any preacher of God's verity, to say unto the heads of families, that they might not so enforce obedience to the gospel law within their house, because it will place temptations to hypocrisy in the way of their servants. The answer to all such quibbles is, I must save my own soul; I must discharge

myself of my own responsibility unto the Lord, whose steward I am. And so must every king; he must save his own soul, by ordering that estate which God hath given him in charge, according to the ordinances of the kingdom of Christ, who is Prince of the kings of the earth. Therefore do I deem that Constantine performed a right dutiful and a right godly act, when he established Christianity as the religion of the empire; whereby, no doubt, the Church of Christ was led into temptation; just as the Church of Scotland and Church of England are led into temptation by being established in their several estates. But is it a new doctrine, that God leadeth His people into temptation, that His mighty power may be glorified in them over all His enemies? or is it not the old doctrine, contained in the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation'? And here it may be said, 'Well, then; and ought not the Church to pray against the temptation of being established by secular princes?' To that I answer, that, if it hath proved a temptation to the Church to be established, or to have the power upon its side, it hath proved the destruction of the Reformed Churches of Spain, Italy, France, and the Netherlands, to have the power set in array against them; while it hath proved the salvation of the Protestant faith in this island to have had the power on its side, although, doubtless, not without a temptation. But, ah me! how shall we escape temptation in this wicked world? And though, in acknowledgment of our weakness, we pray to be preserved from that to which we so often yield, and to have from God as mild a measure of trial as may be consistent with His own purpose; yet we do never look to be out of the fire of temptation, until we are delivered from the militant state of the Church. Nay, but the Church is not her own mistress in this matter, so as to refuse to receive into her communion a man because he is a king; and if that man, who is a king, take on the profession of Christ, he cannot withhold, he must not withhold, from ordering his household according to the ordinances of Christ; and if he do withhold, the preacher of the gospel must tell him out his duty, as did Knox and Latimer in the days of old. When Constantine, therefore, established Christianity in his house, and ordered the estate of his kingdom according to the discipline of Christ, he did a most noble and praiseworthy act of sovereign power, which ought to have been a pattern unto all kings which should come after. Yet it is not to be doubted, that from this time forth began, or rather advanced with more rapid strides, that spirit of courtly flattery, and episcopal ambition of avarice and worldly dignity, which in the course of two centuries vexed the Lord to that degree that, weary of resisting, He gave them up to the lust of their own minds;

constituting over them a king of that mongrel kind, half prince half priest, which they strove after in the wickedness of their hearts."

While I agree therefore that the establishment of the Christian religion by the emperor gave a new impulse to that spirit of Antichrist which was latent in the apostle's days, and is ever present in the Church, I hold as firmly as did all our reformers, that it is the first duty of the magistrate to declare his subordination to Christ, by establishing His law of love and liberty, as the law of his kingdom, and requiring all office-bearers and persons to conform thereto. And it is the part of the Church to receive this dignity as a great boon from her Head, and to occupy with all diligence and constancy the new position which she hath received as the authorised guardian of the realm in all which respects things spiritual. New temptations, no doubt, arise from this new station; temptations to hypocrisy and dissimulation; temptations to wealth, and glory, and power; in one word, temptations to worldliness; against which she must be on her guard, and of which she is well warned in this very epistle: but she is not, through the fierceness of temptation, to shrink from serving her King and Lord, though it were in the fiery furnace and in the lion's den, and in the place of dragons. And, if I err not, the presence of an Established Church is necessary to the production and growth of liberty in a monarchy, and if the Church be faithful, liberty upon true and lasting principles will never fail of arising upon the land. This is a thing so little understood, that I make no apology for quoting another passage from that work in which I have argued all these questions at large.

"The king, so long as he cannot intermeddle in the Church, hath a distinct limit put to his power, and is most effectually prevented from arrogating to himself tyranny over the persons of his subjects, and divine honours unto his own person. For, consider what the Church is; not a silent thing, but full of all manner of voices, concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning grace and righteousness, and mercy and peace, and every other holy and heavenly thing. Nor is the Church an inactive thing, but, all the day long, all the year round, employed in holy offices, not only teaching their duties unto all men, but likewise, with pastoral care, seeing that these duties be righteously discharged, not only teaching doctrine, but exercising discipline within the bounds of the kingdom. And what is discipline, but law under the form of love? In this discipline of the Church, the king may as little interfere as in its doctrine. It belongeth to the Church to regulate it, and likewise to enforce it; and it is of the free will of every member of the Church to submit to

it or not, according to his fear of God, according to his love of Christ, and his fellowship with the Holy Ghost. While the king therefore interposeth not within the pale of the Church, there is not only a bound set within which he cannot go, a limit to his will, but there is also the constant operation of such holy principles and holy practices, in the bosom of the kingdom, as tend, yea and never fail to produce, the amelioration of every evil thing, the sweetening of every relation, the comforting of every infirmity, the prosperity and the honour of every individual in his proper estate. And not only so, but this barrier presented to the will of the king, this operation beyond and above his power, doth ever remind him of the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever Satan, by all the temptations of high estate, by all the prerogatives of sovereign power, would whisper in his ear that he is independent and irresponsible of all; the continual presence and testimony of the inviolate Church doth ever recall to his mind that there is one, even Christ, who is over him, and with whose Church he may not intermeddle. But, if this barrier be broken down, if the king may enter into the sanctuary of the Church; to do any of the offices thereof, to alter or to abrogate, to add or to limit; then, behold, there is nothing left to represent the supremacy of Christ over the king. That true check, that only effectual check to arbitrary and tyrannical power, which God hath set and constituted, in the separateness and inviolateness of Christ's Church, is removed; and nothing is left of a constitutional and permanent kind, to recall unto the mind of the sovereign that truth, necessary to his own preservation, most wholesome for the well-being of his kingdom,—the truth, that Jesus Christ is over him, and hath within his dominions a visible, active institution, with which the king may not intermeddle, before which the king is only as a sinful person, needing the common redemption of all, and to the ordinances of which he is all submissive and obedient as one of the common people. I have heard it said, that our present king, whom may God long preserve the great head of the protestation against the union of royalty and priesthood in one person, did say unto the minister who was to preach before him, 'Forget that thy king is before thee, and preach to me as to another man.' This was wisdom, this was the wisdom of a king; this was piety, this was the piety of a king. Now, consider with yourselves what a salutary effect the continual presence of such a feeling to the mind of a sovereign, the open expression of it every Sabbath in the presence of the people; its solemn recognition every time he takes the sacrament, every time he kneels with his family before the Lord in domestic devotion; consider, I say, what a most wholesome and

salutary effect upon his mind, to incline it to the fear of God and the obedience of Christ, must be wrought by the perpetual presence of the sentiment of his inferiority and responsibility to Christ. But if this be broken down, by giving him any ecclesiastical power whatever, then behold there is nothing to remind him of God, and of Christ, as his superior; of his dignity to stand and rule under Him alone; of the spirit in which he should govern, and of the laws and righteousness and equity which he should execute. He therefore doth necessarily become arbitrary, tyrannical, blasphemous, satanic, or else checks are introduced of a violent and of an evil kind, which tend to bring up another error, That the king hath his authority from the people, and is responsible for the exercise of it to the people."

So much have I thought it necessary to say upon the expression, "where Satan's seat is," as connected with the order in succession which this epistle occupies, lest any one should be betrayed by a word into the baneful and ruinous notion now circulated upon every wind, that a Church establishment is in itself an essentially unchristian thing, and pernicious to the liberties of mankind. It is true that "the kingdoms of the earth and the power of them are Satan's;" but are they not also capable of being wrested and redeemed out of his hand? Is he there the supreme one? Is Christ there not his Lord also, whose name is Prince of the kings of the earth? idle name, if so be they cannot escape as kings from Satan's dominion, but must, however they serve Christ personally, serve Satan royally. Away with such doctrine, alike derogatory to Christ, and to the king and to the people.

HOLDING FAST CHRIST'S NAME AND FAITH.

"And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith."—To hold fast the name of Christ, is to hold fast the power to save: "There is no name given under heaven, amongst men, whereby we must be saved:" the power to heal, and work all signs and wonders: "And that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus:" to assert its supremacy "above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth." And, in one word, to speak only in that name, and not to be perverted by the commandments of the wicked, given forth that "we should not speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." In Scripture, the name of Jehovah in the Old Testament and of Jesus in the New, signify the same with His power; which the Sanhedrim well understood, when they questioned Peter and John, "By what name, or by what power have ye done this?" And Peter in his reply iden-

tifies the name with the very person: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that *by the name* of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even *by him* doth this man stand here before you whole," (Acts iv. 10.) Now, be it observed, that "holding fast the name" is a different thing from "abiding steadfast in the faith of Jesus;" for both of which the angel of this Church is commended. And what is this distinction? The distinction, I think, standeth in this, that while the faith hath respect to the inward work of the Spirit, in uniting the believing soul to Christ, and preserving the reality and the assuredness thereof ever present for our sanctification: the name hath respect to the outward signs of that indwelling Spirit of Christ, such as are enumerated in the conclusion of the Gospel according to Mark. First comes the work of faith, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned," (Mark xvi. 16;)—after which immediately come the signs, which are connected with the name as clearly as the faith is connected with the gospel: "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) I regard it therefore to be as much of the substance of a complete testimony to maintain that the power of the name of Christ prevaileth to work signs and wonders in the earth, and in the body of man, as it is to maintain the power of faith to sanctify the soul; and herein the Protestant Churches have been very faithless: if the Papists have assumed another name, we have not confessed to the name of Christ. And what has been the consequence? Just in proportion as the true doctrine of signs, that they are the evidence of Christ the Redeemer present by the Spirit, in the Church, and the manifestation of the same Spirit, went out, the false doctrine came in, that they were helps to establish the doctrine, as if the doctrine were not essential truth, which needeth no help but an honest conscience; a conscience made honest by the Holy Ghost; by which false notion more sceptics have been made than by all the sceptical writers, turning the attention of men from the ever-present and only adequate evidence of Christianity in their own created and fallen being, away to remote questions of Christian antiquities, very difficult even for the learned, to the unlearned wholly inaccessible: the very soil of scepticism; necessarily so, whether the question were of Christianity or of anything else. And in proportion as the true doctrine of signs, that they are the manifestation of the name and power of Christ is again revived in the Church, and the spell is even now broken, just in that proportion

will Christianity be placed upon its own basis; which is, that Christ hath redeemed us from all evil, and, though departed out of the world, hath a presence and a power still in every believer through the Holy Ghost, mighty enough to overcome the devil, and disease, and death itself. The signs are really signs; signs of this thing, that Jesus, the Redeemer, is in the person who useth them: their evidence is not in their being miraculous, but in their being of that kind of working which Jesus alone was competent to work. He cast the devils out, He healed the diseases of the body, He subjected the elements of nature so that they should not hurt man; He testified to the truth of God's being come in the flesh to save man: and when a poor weak worm of a man is made to do these same things, it is the proof positive, that not his own spirit but the Almighty Spirit of Christ is in him. If, for example, his tongue is taken hold of, and without his understanding made to utter holy and heavenly truths, mysteries in the spirit, then is it proved that another intelligent Spirit than his own hath possession of him: which Spirit, if it confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that Christ is come in the flesh, can be no other than the Spirit of God. And so by these signs, and especially the sign of tongues, and this through the ignorance of the person as to what he utters, is the great doctrine of Christ's dwelling in many human persons in the world, at the same time that He is out of the world, the doctrine of the Church's oneness with Him, and with each other, and the doctrine of a personal and Divine Spirit to maintain this union, and be the worker of this power, and consequently the Divinity of Christ himself, of the man Christ Jesus,—all these doctrines become realities, observable truths, truths of sense, truths to be seen and heard; which, without the signs, would not have been credible. For how could we believe that the spirit of a dead man, risen from the dead and departed to the Father, should at once occupy me and all the Church living in the world? It is one thing to hand down a doctrine by tradition, and quite another thing to get for it a first establishment amongst men. The doctrine of our oneness of Spirit—not likeness but oneness, identity, very sameness—could never, I dare to say, have obtained credence among men, by other means than the signs; and now that it is never discoursed of at all, or only as a figure and metaphor, and is hardly believed by any, I think God will have recourse to the same method of reviving it, by reviving the signs of the Holy Ghost. And if so be, then I perceive, by the way in which all parties, Moderate and Evangelical, have entertained the question of the possibility of such things, that if the Holy Ghost again reappear, He will be blasphemed, and thus the Protestant Churches will fall for ever. God

prevent it. O rash men, reflect, and think not that all wisdom is contained in Paley's "Evidences," or Campbell's "Answer to Hume on Miracles." I challenge any man to set forth an argument to show that God intended these signs to abide only for a season in the Church. It is not possible to find in all the Scriptures the shadow of evidence or argument for such an opinion.

While thus I maintain that "to hold fast the name of Christ" is to assert the power of that name, to beat back the empire of Satan everywhere, and at all times, to the end of giving the demonstration so often as it is needed, that the same Jesus of Nazareth is both Christ and Lord, and that the Son of God is come in the flesh, by exhibiting His power in flesh—that is, in the living members of the Church—over all the power of the enemy, I am very far from placing this as the whole or the chief matter of a Christian minister's testimony; for though it be a most important matter, placed as it is first in the commendation of the angel of the Church of Pergamos, we are told by the Lord himself, that "many shall say on that day, Lord, have we not cast out devils in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" to whom Christ shall profess, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." This second and still more important part of a Christian's testimony consisteth in not denying the faith of Jesus, which, as distinguished from the former, I consider as having respect to the gospel, or good news of salvation, the proper objects of faith, the thing believed in to the saving of the soul. The faith of Christ hath respect to things invisible and yet to come: the name of Christ hath respect to a present putting forth of power. From holding fast the power of Christ's name, we are continually tempted by the apparent and ordinary course of nature, saying, "All things continue as they were from the beginning:" from adhering to the faith of Christ, we are tempted by the enjoyment of things seen, and the terrors of the wicked. The law of nature, which is a law of sin and death, holds its steady and apparently irreversible course, and that a word should be able to oversway it passeth almost the possibility of belief. Yet this is what a Christian beareth testimony to, when in the name of Jesus he maketh prayer of faith unto the Father. What are such utterances but declarations of the powerful name of Jesus to bring the thing besought to pass, be it to cast out a devil or to heal disease, or to obtain any gift, or to be delivered from any impending trial. Faith in the name of Christ is the basis of all prayer, and no prayer of faith offered in that name shall remain unfulfilled. The Church on earth inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and by Him inspired with thoughts and desires, and knowledge agreeable to the will of God,

doth breathe these forth to the Father in the name of Christ; and the Father by granting the things besought doth both testify to His own being and give glory to Christ, and prove the course of events to be wholly under Christ's control and government. If the Church did offer bootless prayer to the Father in the name of Christ, then would the Father and the Son want a testimony on the earth; which testimony standeth not in things past alone, but in things continually occurring,—not in words written, but in works doing. The Church is a body of living men, who have power to foreknow and supplicate for future things through the Spirit, and those prayers publicly made unto the Father in the name of Christ, and as publicly granted and done, do demonstrate the Father and the Son to be no barren names or ideas, but very powers and persons, in whose hand are all future events, and who rule the world in righteousness, and dwell in men's hearts, and admonish them of the future, and enable them to admonish the world. Prayer and the answer of prayer are therefore a continual demonstration of the power of Christ's name; and the man who offers faithful prayers, and observes the answer of the same with thankfulness, is the man who holdeth fast the name of Christ. These two methods which we have opened of holding fast Christ's name, by outward workings of the Spirit, and continual offering of prayer, are beautifully combined in that "promise of the Father" which our Lord gave the Church in His last discourse with the apostles, (John xiv.) After declaring that the Father was in Him, both speaking the words and doing the works, He adds, in His most solemn and sacred manner, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father," (ver. 12.) This promise is made to every believer whatsoever without restriction, without condition of any sort. You might as well say that these words, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life," was only for the Christians of the first two or three centuries, as say that this promise of doing His works, and greater works than His, were only for such a time. And be it observed, they are works for witness—of which He had just said, "Believe me for the very work's sake." It is the gift, moreover, which they receive in consequence of His going to the Father, and therefore briefly denominated "the promise of the Father," (Acts i. 4;) and "the promise of the Holy Ghost received of the Father," (Acts iii. 32.) This was given on the day of Pentecost to the believing Church, and wherefore it is not possessed by her still, is to me not a mysterious and unaccountable thing, but a plain matter-of-fact demonstration of her want of faith; for to

every one who believeth is it promised. Upon this bequest of the inheritance of power, follows the ample privilege of petitioning in the name of Christ, whatever is agreeable to the Father's will: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it," (John xiv. 13, 14.) Now, let no one make void this great dowry by alleging that, because we know not the Father's will, we can present no prayer with any confidence. Then, present none at all—live prayerless, and die prayerless; for it is written, "But ask in faith, nothing doubting, ... let not him that doubteth think he shall receive anything of the Lord." It is true, as the apostle saith, "we know not what things we should pray for as we ought;" but it is likewise true, as in the same place he likewise saith, that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered." And in that very discourse, where these two most precious legacies are bequeathed to the Church by her dying Lord, over and over again doth He drive the evil heart of unbelief away from this subterfuge, by assuring her of the presence of the Holy Ghost to teach her all things, to manifest unto her the Father and the Son, to lead her into all truth, and to teach her things to come. I know not whether I am more grieved or enkindled against the weak and wicked arguments of men, by which they would turn our prayers into random words and venturesome intrusions, from being Spirit-suggested desires, utterances of the needful members to the sympathising and all-supplying Head. Prayer of faith, and preaching in faith, and any other work done in faith, are as much supernatural works of the Spirit within us as the gift of tongues, or the gift of healing, or the working of miracles. That division of the gifts of the Spirit into extraordinary and ordinary, into miraculous and not miraculous, is utterly futile; they are all alike supernatural, all alike extraordinary, and when enumerated by the apostle, (1 Cor. xii. 7–12,) all combined together as parts and subdivisions of one operating Spirit. These are indeed inward and outward; the one, the Spirit working with our spirit; the other, the Spirit using the tongue, or the hand, or some other member of the body, for the demonstration unto others of His inward operation. Prayer is inward in the conception, or inspiration of it; it is outward in the wording and the answer of it. O God, inspire my prayers! teach me to ask only what Thou wilt grant, and suffer me not to ask anything besides that Thou and Thy Son may be glorified in me! Oh, that I might hold fast the name of Christ.

This is a great point of faithfulness; but it is not all, as hath been set forth above. To the present and current demonstration of the

name of Christ, must be added the not denying His faith; the not yielding it to the temptations of the world, nor to the artifices of the enemy of all truth and righteousness; the contending for it earnestly, as it was once delivered unto the saints. Very early did Satan introduce errors of every kind into the Christian faith, and wrought most subtilely to corrupt the fountainhead of Christian truth. And what he could abide the least of all was, that Christ is come in the flesh; both out of diabolical spite against Him who drave him out of this his palace and domain, but also out of a subtle craft to keep men from the knowledge of that which can alone emancipate them out of his thraldom. For as no one could redeem flesh but Christ only by coming in it, so there is no redemption to us but by the honour of this His work in the faith of it. Misgive in the faith of this, that He dwelt during the days of His flesh in this mortal, corruptible, passive, and temptable flesh, and you entirely miss the mark. Believe it to have been changed from ours in order to His taking of it, to have been differenced in any one atom from ours, and you believe a lie, a soul-destroying lie. This was the great point of faith contended for in the primitive Church, and it is beginning to be the great point contended for again. And he denies the faith, who doth not stand stiffly up to all gainsayers, and denounce it as a lie of Satan, that Christ's flesh was in anything different from ours. Holy it was, yea most holy, but only through the information of the soul of Christ by the Holy Ghost, not from any difference in itself. It was flesh ever presented holy, by the power of the Son of God, acting in a human will. In itself sinful, but as under His will, most holy. As taken by Him, sinful; as made by Him, always holy. Holy, not from any will of its own, but from the will of the Spirit. Redeemed to be holy, not created holy. A holy thing, by generation of the Son into it, and by the life of the Son in it, not without Him. I insist the more on this great truth, because I perceive it is the truth by which the sons of Levi are to be separated and purified. Blessed is he that endureth the fiery trial. And here I cannot help offering publicly my thanksgivings to God, that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland were lately prevented from uttering anything but orthodoxy on this great head. So may it always be. While this was the point chiefly or always assailed of Satan by heresies within the Church, the point of doctrine commonly attacked from without was, That Jesus is the Lord, to whom every knee must bow of things in heaven and things on earth, and to whom every tongue must confess. This strikes at the root of all idolatry and tyranny, as the other doth at the root of all unholiness: this, the crucifixion of the world,—that, the crucifixion of the flesh.

That He is a King was the noble confession which Christ witnessed before Pontius Pilate; that He is the King of kings, who only may receive worship, is the doctrine, for the testimony of which the martyrs of the primitive Church wore their crown; and in contending against the usurper of His name and dignity, the Roman pontiff, the martyrs of the second band, were also slain; and the martyrs of Scotland likewise died for the testimony of "Christ's royal office in his house." So very important is this doctrine held by the Apostle Paul, that he gives it as one of the tests of spirits, (1 Cor. xii. 3,) "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;" and John's test is this,—"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in (the) flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world," (1 John iv. 2, 3.) I regard these two points of doctrine as the chief things worth contending for; the one respecting the work of Christ done in the flesh, the other respecting the work which He is now doing in the Spirit, and which He is to do when He comes again into the world. These are those three works of Christ: first, His work in mortal and corruptible and sinful flesh, to do God's will therein, in conforming it to all righteousness, and in raising it from the grave to honour and immortality: secondly, there is His work in the Spirit, whereby He doth work in the elect the same power of restraining the law of the flesh, and presenting its members holiness unto the Lord, whereby also He doth unite them into oneness with Himself, and through the Church express the manifold wisdom, put forth the power, and communicate the holiness of God, in spite of the adverse fallen creature: thirdly, there is the work of His glorious advent, when He shall put forth His power in the body also, raising from the dead His saints, and purifying the material heavens and earth from all uncleanness, separating the goats from the sheep, and sending through the elements that liquid stream of fire which shall sweep away into the pit of hell everything which will not abide the fiery proof; and after this over a purified world He shall reign and worship—worship the Father, and reign over the Father's work for ever and ever. These three progressive parts of Christ's work He doth in His characters of Prophet, Priest, and King; showing God, purifying the earthly and the heavenly things, and ruling over the visible and invisible creation. His work in flesh is as much a work of power as His work in the spirit, or His work in the body of glory, and as much needing all the might of God: but it is not manifestly so, though inwardly it is the most so, just as to defeat an enemy with his own weapons, wrested out of his own

hand, is a work of greater prowess than to come upon him, armed cap-a-pie from the armoury of God. But into these great heads of faith we may not enter at large: only we will say this further, that on these two doctrines, a holy work in weak and mortal, sinful and corruptible flesh, and a work of power in raising it from the grave, and with it all the elect, and delivering the creation from the bondage of corruption,—on these two points hang all the Law and the Prophets, all the creeds and confessions of the orthodox Church. Give me them, and I will demonstrate a Trinity, a redemption, a restitution of all things. Take them from me, and I can prove nothing. How important then these two points, which are now before the Church in the form of controversy! which Satan hath the hardihood to controvert anew, and which I fear he will find force enough to resist and withstand, and perhaps to cast out of the Church. Let us ministers beware. It is a time of sifting trial, when very few seem able to stand. The storms are loosened from their resting-places; the winds are no longer restrained: judgment is about to begin at the house of God; and if the righteous hardly escape, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?

ANTIPAS THE FAITHFUL MARTYR.

"Even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth."—Concerning this person whose eulogy is thus gloriously pronounced by the Son of God, we have no authentic records, and that which is related in the *menology* of the Greeks, that he was put into a brazen bull and burned to death, is generally regarded as fabulous. But be this as it may, his record is on high; and his name alone among all the martyrs of Christ hath been written in the book of Jesus Christ the faithful Martyr. It is very noble to be equalled in style with the Son of God himself: such nobility hath Antipas received. In the first chapter, where the style of the Trinity is given in names appropriate to this vision, that of Jesus Christ is "the faithful Martyr;" and here that of Antipas is the same, "my faithful martyr." The only difference is, that whereas Christ was the faithful Witness to God, we are the faithful witnesses to Christ. He died to testify of the Father: we die for the witness of Jesus; setting to our seal that His testimony to the Father was true. This is our calling, our highest calling, to hold fast the name and not to deny the faith of Jesus; to assert Him, to proclaim Him, to serve Him in the sight and hearing of all kings, and of all men, as the only Christ and the only Lord; and to uphold the testimony which He gave concerning the invisible God as the only truth, and entirely to be depended on. Witnesses we are

not to anything new, not to anything of our own, but to the word of Christ, which He revealeth to us by the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit doth not speak of Himself, but only what He heareth from Christ, who speaketh what He heareth from the Father; whereby from the Father unto the world there is a stream of faithful and loving witness, good news of salvation flowing through the way of Christ by the Spirit into the Church, and out of the Church unto the world; calling thence as many as have received the like precious faith, and condemning the rest because they have not believed upon the only-begotten Son of the Father. Now it is ever to be borne in mind that though it be the minister's province to give the example hereof unto the Church, it is the Church's part to follow the example which he sets of faithful witness-bearing. And in the prosecution of this sacred calling, it will needs come to pass, that he must reject and resist, and seek to put down the errors which are ever afloat amongst men of natural understanding without spiritual regeneration: and it will as certainly follow that the natural man who cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God will resist as dreams, doatings, and ravings of madness, as mopings of melancholy, signs of a dissocial and evil temper, malignant aspersions, and unjust judgments, and blasphemous expressions and innovations, and familiarities with God, and deceivings of the people, and resistances of authority, and perhaps suggestions of the devil, those true and faithful witness-bearings of the Spirit, which the man of God cannot choose but declare in the hearing of all men. And straightway there ariseth between the children of the Spirit and the children of this world a strong controversy and unceasing contention, which, beginning in words, most frequently endeth in imprisonment and death; for the world cannot change itself from being the persecutor of the Church to become her favourer and friend. If she love the world or the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in her. "Marvel not," saith the Lord, "that the world hate you: it hated me before it hated you: if you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Thus by the natural contradiction between the devil-possessed world, and the Spirit-possessed Church, he who began with witness-bearing commonly endeth with martyrdom: insomuch that the same word in the Greek is used to express both a witness and a martyr. A martyr is no more than a witness concluding and sealing his testimony: a witness is no less than a martyr entering upon his course of imprisonment and death. Many, yea most, witnesses are deterred before they come to that extremity. They are seduced by the

smooth flatteries of men, they yield to the fond and easy suggestions of the flesh, they are deterred by the fear of the world's frown; they dread singularity, and they are astounded by the terrors of heresy and blasphemy charged upon them from the worldling ministers, the hireling shepherds around: they have not confidence in the teaching of Christ; their soul mistrusts the admonitions of the Spirit; they lose themselves in arguments and speculations of the natural understanding, and seek not to the Spirit to find themselves again; and so one drops off, and another from the royal course; and few, few there be of those who were called with the heavenly calling who win the heavenly goal and are crowned with the martyr's crown. Not so with Antipas the faithful: in days when death came stalking in to the house of God, and with grim voice commanded him to renounce the name and forego the faith of Christ, he would not obey the king of terrors, but abode constant and true to Him who hath the keys of hell and death. Methinks it is even more perilous now-a-days to contend for truth than it was then. There were pastors over the churches faithful and true, who, like Timothy of Ephesus, and Polycarp of Smyrna, and the angel of the Church of Pergamos, stood true to the great Shepherd, and gave the example of constancy to the people. But now behold the ministers of the gospel are for the most part devoted to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life; and those who have a little strength are jealous of those who have more, are content to remain babes in Christ, and war in the foremost ranks against those who strive steadily towards perfection. So that the most fervent and feverish opposition to the doctrines of Christ's being come in very flesh, in that which is common to the Church; and of His being Lord over the spiritualities to resist Satan's evil supremacy over the body and over the world by overcoming disease and deadly things; and of His coming as Lord to cast out the principalities and powers of darkness from the creation of God, are abhorred by those who are called of themselves evangelical, but who seem to me to be exactly in the state in which Paul describeth the Corinthian Church to have been, "carnal, even babes in Christ." Hence the trial, hence the peril to the faithful witnesses, when they find those they were wont to call brethren and fellow-labourers, whom the constant voice of the churches calleth faithful, and true, who have been found wrestling against the worldliness and wickedness of their cold and lukewarm brethren, who are consecrated from missionary and Bible purposes, and carry a full sail of popular applause, — when those men, idolised by religious magazines, and trumpeted forth in religious newspapers, the saints of Protestantism, who stand to us for apostles and pro-

phets, though they have made void the bulk of the apostolic and prophetic writings by their glosses, and interpretations, and traditions,—when these the cardinals of the Evangelical Church, some witness for the truth as the Spirit hath taught it to him, and the Scriptures confirmed it, finds arrayed against him, mad against him, stirred up with a fierceness of zeal unexampled, he yields, partly by terror, mostly by doubting of the Spirit's witness within him, the point, or smooths it away with art of words, and suffers the enemy of the truth to ride over his head. Oh! thou man, whosoever thou art, that thus findest thyself, hear the Lord pronounce from heaven the name of Antipas, and call him His faithful witness: let this one voice outweigh the tumult of a thousand men. Oh! ye ministers of the truth, let Christ's commendation of the angel of Pergamos for not surrendering the banner in such a fearful time of controversy as now rageth, encourage thee. The time is near at hand when trials of as stern a kind will need to be proved, battles of a fiercer edge have to be endured: make ready your armour. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel," (Eph. vi. 14–19.)

If now from the literal Pergamos, one of the seven places chosen to substantiate these prophecies, and realise these truths of ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline, we turn to that period of the Church which authenticates it in time, and presents to us who look back afar off, and have not the very condition of those places present to us, and know of them only through tradition, the same advantage of a distinct object in treating which the early churches had in the place itself; we will find a very wonderful correspondence indeed between the language of this verse, and the period in question, which is the period from the time that the Church was established by Constantine, until the Papacy got the upper hand; that is, the period between the termination of the ten-days' persecution of the Church of Smyrna, and the authority of the woman Jezebel in the Church of Thyatira. The ten-days' persecution is the subject of chapter xii., which also contains the woman in her beauty, in her persecution, and in her flight into the wilderness; nor does she

reappear as the Jezebel mother of harlotry and patroness of idolatry, till the 17th chapter, when in this fearful disguise, drunk with the blood of martyrs, she is seen ascending out of the wilderness. The intervening time between her going into the wilderness, and her coming up, must then be the period of the martyrdoms historically set forth by the reality of the martyrdom of Antipas. This intervening period is contained in the 13th chapter, which, however, contains not only the period of Pergamos, but also of Thyatira, because it contains the whole period of the woman's supremacy; for in the 17th chapter she is brought up to her ignominious execution. The historical period proper to the Church of Pergamos, comes so far into the period of the 13th chapter, as brings us down to the time of the papal supremacy, when the woman came into the condition of riding upon the beast. The period again of the Church of Thyatira, beginning from that point, occupies the time during which the woman is permitted to rule in the Church: the one, presenting us with the opposition of Satan, through the means of the state; the other, with the same opposition through the means of the Church of Rome; the one, the period of the beast; the other, the period of the image of the beast: the one, the period during which the beast from the sea, that is, the emperor, had the ascendency: the other, the period during which the beast from the earth, that is, the pope, had the ascendency: and these two periods compose the forty-and-two months, or 1260 years, of the papal Roman Empire; being but one period of the actings of the beast, namely, the papal period as distinguished from the pagan which went before, and the infidel which follows after. Observe, now, the name Antipas, the martyr of this period, doth signify, in the Greek, "against every one, against all;" and when we examine the thirteenth chapter, we find, (ver. 3,) that "all the world wondered after the beast;" and again, (ver. 7,) "power was given to him over all kindreds and nations and tongues, and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This language, in a very remarkable manner, draws our attention to the universality of His dominion, and constitutes a ground for the name of Antipas, "against all," being given to the witnesses who witnessed against Him. Again, the angel of the Church of Pergamos is commended for his faithfulness, in that he held fast *the name* of Christ. Now, the same chapter of this prophecy informs us that another name than the name of Jesus was introduced into the Church, whose number is six hundred threescore and six, which, according to the earliest, and, I think, the best inter-

pretation, signifies, in the Greek, THE LATIN KINGDOM, and in the Hebrew, ROME. But, be this as it may, it is certain that one form of the mystery of iniquity, constituted during that period, is the mystery of another name than the name of Christ—namely, *the name of the beast*, which is mentioned more than once in this book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, (xiii. 17; xv. 2.) Moreover, as we shall see in the sequel of this lecture, the promise of the new name is especially made to the faithful ones of this Church, indicating that their peculiar province in the mystery of godliness was to resist the false name introduced by the mystery of iniquity. The martyrs, signified by the name Antipas, I should therefore regard as those who stood forth in all parts of the Church to resist the pretensions of the papal see, advocated and supported by all the power of the emperors—as, for example, the Waldenses and the Albigenses. Moreover, the angel is commended for not denying the faith of Jesus; and we observe, from all the language of the thirteenth chapter, that there was a steady purpose of introducing a worship altogether new and different from the worship of the Father and the Son, even the worship of the beast and his image. But this is so very remarkable a work of evil, that we deem it worthy of a little more careful study. Let us address ourselves therefore for a few moments to the consideration of the mystery of iniquity contained in the 13th chapter, and we shall see how perfect a design it was for overthrowing the name and faith of our Lord Jesus.

The first effort of Satan against the Church, as detailed in the 12th chapter, and briefly set forth in the trials of the former Church, the Church of Smyrna, was a rude attempt of cruelty and violence, to subvert the faith of the disciples by pains and penalties, by imprisonment and death. It went on without art or artifice,—it was straightforward work, designed to terrify men out of their faith. But, in process of time, when Satan found that he laboured in vain by these methods, and did but promote what he would destroy, he addressed himself to his wiles, and did compass the most refined artifice and consummate deception which the world ever saw; and which in Scripture is denominated THE mystery of Iniquity, in contradistinction to THE mystery of Godliness. This consisteth, like that which it so cunningly counterfeits, of two powers, persons, or agents; the one, the beast with seven heads and ten horns, to whom Satan gave his seat and his power and great authority, and for whom he exacteth and obtaineth the worship of all the world; the other, the beast out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb, whose first work it is to win from the other the wicked ascendency over mankind, which he doth by devilish power

of craft and wonder-working; and this done, he maketh an image to the other beast, and procureth that these should share the worship of mankind. And both together so prevail against God and His Church, and so perplex and captivate men, that no one is preserved from their delusion whom God hath not written in the Lamb's book of life; and together, these two deceivers make to themselves a name above every name upon the earth. This is the machinery of the 13th chapter, expressive of the perfect counterfeit of the Father and the Son,—the former beast personating the Father, the latter beast personating the Son. As the Son proceedeth from the substance of the Father, so the second beast proceedeth out of the earth, which is the substance of the former, coming out of the earth, and being substantially the same, having the same territory, and the same subjects, and the same dominion; the one dwells before or in the presence of the other, and works all His works for the sake of the other, to obtain for Him worship and service; and in consideration thereof becomes the image of the former which Christ by the resurrection became in flesh, as before He had been in Spirit, (holy likewise before in flesh, though not in the glory and strength of God;) to which image He procures worship co-ordinate and commensurate with the worship bestowed upon the former. It may be a question, and I know is with many a question, whether the papal (called holy) Roman empire with its two powers, imperial and papal, does well answer as a fair interpretation of this complex symbol; and this is one of those questions upon which men will ever remain much divided, for it requires no small store of historical knowledge, and very great judgment, to take in the several subjects according to their proper size and value: but I think no doubt can remain that this chapter exhibits in principle the full-length portraiture and completed form of that Antichrist whose special character the Apostle John declareth to be this, that he denieth the Father and the Son: "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son," (1 John ii. 22.) This 13th chapter is the embodiment of that Antichrist, is the triumph of His power, find it historically where and when you please. I hold, for reasons which fall to be stated hereafter, that the whole had symbolical accomplishment in the papal, or as they term it, the holy Roman empire: but it is too great and grand a demonstration to end there; it will embody itself really, as every symbol, if it have not done so in time past, must do in time to come. This has not in time past been embodied, and therefore, like the changing of the sun, moon, and stars, under the sixth seal, I believe its reality outstandeth still, and waiteth accomplishment: for nothing but a thing real can become

a symbol. Now in the time when this symbol was fulfilling itself, the period of the Pergamos Church doubtless falleth; *Satan's seat, the name, the faith,* and other things as we shall see, are common to this Church with that vision. Which are not coincidences accidental, but such as have along with others forced me to adopt the view of the epistles, as being in succession of time, as well as reality of place, and universality of application. In power imperial, and in power ecclesiastical, in the State and in the Church, combining for the casting out of both Father and Son, and endeavouring to set themselves up in their stead; in the energy, power, and authority of churches established by the civil power, and by it sustained, I believe that the great work of Antichrist hath been and will be accomplished. It may end in the raising up of a person at the head of the State, who, with the person at the head of the Church, will give personal accomplishment to this mystery of iniquity: it may be accomplished in many places, and by many by-plots, but the principle will be the same for ever; the Church and the State combining their several powers to cast out the true worshippers of God and of the Lamb, and calling upon us to deny their name. How far it hath ripened itself in these lands, how near it is to come, I believe that no man is so fully apprised as to say: but I perceive it to be very near in that land which is nearest my heart, and in that Church to which my duty is most due; and I commend it to the prayers of all who can discern in these my words, something more than the doatings of folly, or the ravings of madness, to give themselves night and day to prayer and intercession, that none of those things may come to pass. Is it so strange that a Church constituted of God should cast out Jesus and His disciples? Did not the Jewish Church so? And what saith the apostle to the Gentiles? "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee," (Rom. xi. 17–21.)

THE REPROOF.

After this commendation of the angel of Pergamos, and enumeration of His faithful workers, the Watchman and Shepherd of Israel proceedeth to the work of reproof, which is introduced with as much courtesy, and worded with as much gentleness, as the subject would

admit of: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication," (Rev. ii. 14.) The angel is reproved for the neglect of wholesome discipline, and for permitting to remain in the Church of Pergamos certain who held erroneous and evil doctrines; whereof two are mentioned, the one that of Balaam, the other that of the Nicolaitanes. The Lord does not say what the minister of the Church ought to have done with such, but simply charges it against him as an offence, that such persons should be found within the bounds of his jurisdiction: thou hast *there*, that is in Pergamos, them that hold the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. This bears out the idea of a local bounds or diocese, of which the several ministers of the churches were regarded by Christ as having the responsibility. Of these Balaamites and Nicolaitanes, because they are resident in his city, he is to bear the blame; just as the vicegerent and ambassador of any king would have to bear the blame if he were not stirred up to wrath, and moved to proceed against any who should take upon them in the name of his king to promulgate falsehood, with the stamp of the king to issue base coin, as the subjects of the king to carry on contraband traffic, or in any other way whatever to offend the laws and prostitute the name of him whose person he represents. Even so the angel of a Church being planted in any town, or city, or district of the world, is not only called upon to testify against the various violations and false religions which there prevail; but also to keep a vigilant eye upon the professors of the true religion, lest they set forth anything in the name of the Lord Jesus, which is not of the truth, and therefore dishonourable to, and contradictory of, Him who is the Truth. Not only doth Christ expect it of every angel of the Church to do a pastor's part in feeding the flock and preventing roots of bitterness from springing up, but also to do an ambassador, or messenger, or angel's part in taking observation that no one in all these parts do utter anything to the injury of His high and holy prerogatives: He expecteth that His angel or nuncio to those regions should not only proclaim Him King over all the earth, and call upon the people, and especially the magistrates, to come in with their allegiance to Him, as Christ and Lord; but also to take heed lest any coming in the same name should put forth erroneous views on those things which concern His person, His office, or the holy laws of His kingdom. Many ministers of Christ think they have fulfilled their part in feeding their own flock, and preserving light and love and purity there; and that

they ought to bear themselves indifferently or inoffensively to others, of whatever sect or denomination they be. It is not so: and he that thinketh thus snugly to keep his house and home in security, shall not long have either house or home to hold. For enemies are all abroad, and ever active to overthrow the dominion, and cast out the name of our King; against whom if we will not arm in loyal zeal, and march to the borders of the kingdom, and go round the bulwarks of Zion, and do the duty of the tented field, there shall soon be neither light, nor peace, nor love, nor purity in any house or habitation of the people. I am called upon here in London, where God in His providence hath cast my lot, to do my diligence to denounce every one whatever who promulgates in Christ's name what Christ would blush to acknowledge. For example: if any man say He came not in tempted and tempting flesh, I must withstand him to the uttermost, as, God helping me, I most surely will: or, that coming so, He made not that flesh holy and sinless at all times and in all estates of this mortal life, I must challenge and fight him: or, that He came not in love to all, and to make atonement for all, then down must my gauntlet go again: or that He was not very man, or that He was not very God, or that He was not the Messiah promised to the Jews, or that He is not the only Sovereign of kings, or that any other person, as the pope, may have the supremacy; or if anything be advanced contrary to the laws of His kingdom, as that we should not be holy and perfect, but may content ourselves with some shortcoming; or that we may not take confidence to ourselves in His name, but must seek for some evidence or sign superadded thereto: if any of these, or the other multitudinous errors which are afloat, be broached in the hearing, or promulgated in the neighbourhood, of any minister of Christ, he is bound by his honour and loyalty to take arms against it, and contend unto the death like a valiant soldier, good and true, for the integrity of the Name, and the observance of the commandment of his great King and Lord. Is it enough that I purge my own flock of such abominations? It is not enough. I am not a pastor only, but an angel, minister, or ambassador of Christ, to represent His person, and stand for His honour in all those parts, and put down with the spiritual weapons of our warfare all who would deceive redeemed men as to the work and worth of their Redeemer: I insist upon this point the more because it seems to me to present a fuller and more perfect view of the name "angel of the Church" than I have been able to give before. He is Christ's commissioner, His plenipotentiary, His representative, in all those parts; not merely His delegate to feed one particular flock. And

in what way, at what times, and by what means, is he to bear this testimony against every form of error, which men, under the banner of Christ, may broach? In all ways, in all times, and by all means; but chiefly in his preaching, prayers, and public ministry; in his writings, and in his daily disputations with the enemies of the truth; always remembering to do nothing by strife or vain glory, for the man of God must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, meekly instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

Seeing then that it is the office of the "angels of the churches," not only to bear the banner of the truth, but also to fight under it, against every banner hostile to the truth, or hypocritically pretending to be for the truth, and we, the "angels of the churches," like the captains of an army, do only set the example of valour, and show the manner of the fight, and give the command to the fighting men, who are dishonoured when they follow not their leader's footsteps, it is manifest that this work of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, is as much the duty of the private Christian, as of the official minister, as much of the members of the Church, as of her pastors. There is no more fatal error than that any man, in his Christian liberty, may not set his hand to any work which Christ hath commanded. He must, he cannot be free from the obligation of a perfect and complete faith, of a perfect and complete witness, of a perfect and complete obedience. We ministers are the stewards over Christ's house to feed it, but we are not the house; we are the commissariat of the army, to find it in provisions and arms, but not the army: in one word, the Church is not made for the ministry, but the ministry for the Church. I cannot but think, that there exists a most unwarrantable usurpation on the part of the ministry, when they think that with them lies the whole privilege of redarguing error and propagating truth: which, joined with the rigorous custom of requiring so many years of regular education in a university, does truly leave the laity in a condition of indifference and indisposition to truth and error, which is now beginning to be felt with fatal influence by every one engaged in working the mighty vessel of the Church out of the narrow creeks, where she hath been long laid up, into the broad and deep seas, where she may serve her office. We find the people in a lethargy, and what is worse, in a paralysis of all their powers of discerning truth from error, arising from no other cause than this, that they have of a long time left these things to their ministers, to whom, being attached by the ties of natural love and esteem, they are become lamentably subservient,

and are driven at their pleasure. It is not clear to me, but that the base subjection to authorities, may lead again to the persecution of those who dare to stand up and say to these authorities, You are abusing, you are neglecting your trust, you are rocking the people in false security, or leading them to perdition. If a layman were to set aside the use of the ministry, he setteth Christ aside in his ordinance, if, having used the ordinance of a ministry, he do not maintain the truth as it is in Jesus, against all error as it is in Satan, he hath used it to little purpose indeed, or rather he hath not used it at all; for as an ordinance in the Church, the very use of the ministry is to testify unto the truth, and show out the full truth unto the Spirit witnessing in the people. Was it to the ministry, or to the people, that Jude wrote, "that they should contend earnestly for the faith, as it was once delivered to the saints;" that John wrote, "ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things;" that Jesus promised of the Comforter, "that He should lead them into all truth, and show them things to come." The angels are the messengers of the truth, the churches are those who have set to their seal that their message is true; and, this done, are bound by word and deed, by life and death, to maintain the truth in all ways which are proper to a spiritual man.

The very ground of the reproof to the angel of the Church of Pergamos, is, not that he himself had failed in holding fast Christ's name, or in affirming his truth; but that he had been unmindful of the errors in which others were snared, and in which they were seeking to snare unstable souls. "Wherefore," saith He, who hath the stars in His right hand, "Thou art to be blamed because thou hast not felt grieved and wounded for the truth, and for my sake, neither afflicted for thy brother's sake, but hast suffered such an error quietly to root and grow up beside thee, for the destruction of many. I endure not such sloth in thee, such indifference, such saving of thyself. Thou shouldst have offered thyself to the combat, thou oughtest to have put on thine armour, and gone forth to battle; thou hast been too fearful of thyself, too little devoted unto me. Go forth quickly, and root out that nest of evil, go quickly and enlighten that dark region of my Church, go quickly and summon these disobedient people to surrender to the truth, or else I will come quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth."—Here I must pause and confess my sin unto God: of nothing doth my conscience more loudly rebuke me, than of not having contended enough for the faith. Lord, thou knowest my repentance, and thou knowest my purpose. Be my helper, O God!

THE BALAAMITES.

Having thus ascertained the general ground of the rebuke, and applied it to the purpose of doctrine, we now proceed to examine the nature of those two errors, for the allowance of which the angel of the Church of Pergamos was reproved. The first is denominated thus: "Those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." This avaricious and obstinate prophet is in other places of the New Testament used as a warning to the Christian ministry, as in the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude; to which I would carry your attention, that we may have before us the whole of the commentary of the Holy Ghost on that Old Testament history. In the former of the places referred to, (2 Pet. ii. 15,) it occurs in the midst of a very various discourse concerning the apostasy in the Church, which is to draw on the judgment of the quick and the perdition of the ungodly, at the coming of the Lord. That epistle, in which this full-length portraiture of the last apostasy occurreth, hath more of the manner of the ancient prophets about it than any other book of the New Testament, except the Apocalypse. Behold how it is constructed. There is first the delineation of our standing in grace, through faith, (i. 1–5;) then of the certain continuance therein through active holiness, (i. 5–11,) until the time when the entrance shall be ministered to us abundantly into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the introductory part, containing the Gospel of our assured salvation. Then follows the express object and purpose of the epistle, "to keep them in remembrance of what he had taught them concerning the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (i. 11–16,) of the certainty of which they might not doubt after what had been seen on the mount of transfiguration, which was the seal of all the prophets whom God had set for the testimony of His coming in glory and majesty, (i. 16–21.) Thus having announced his subject, and the dignity of it, he proceeds in the next place to lay out the sad and miserable character of the false teachers who should come into the Church, and the havoc which they should work in the vineyard of the Lord. This is the view which Peter had of the times between his day and the coming of the Lord; and he was anxious to give them to the Church, because he felt his end approaching. Without staying upon this awful forewarning, so awfully fulfilled in the Papacy, and, if I err not, more awfully to be fulfilled yet in the downright infidelity which is taking possession of the whole Church, Protestant and Papal, and of none so hastily,

I think, as in the Church of Scotland itself, I go on to conclude the digest of this prophetical epistle. The second chapter being wholly taken up with this exhibition of the Church, as Peter foresaw it was to be, the third opens with a reiteration of his entreaty to the faithful in the midst of this apostasy, to cleave unto the words of the prophets and the commandments of the apostles concerning the coming of the Lord, because there would arrive a general oblivion and scoffing of that blessed hope, as beyond and beside the course of nature; whereupon when, though the Lord might long delay, He would come at length, to the perdition of the ungodly and the purgation of the elements of creation, after which, in the new heavens and the new earth, the righteous shall reign in righteousness. Such is the bird's-eye view which Peter had of the future fate of the Church; so very much in keeping with the old prophets, that by the very style of it I could have known it to be inspired by the same Spirit. An apostasy, embodying all forms of wickedness, introducing a contempt for and profanation of the hope of the Lord's coming, which should draw on that very judgment upon the world, from which His people should be drawn out, as Lot was from Sodom. What fatal blindness holds the eyes of this generation, that they should not see this now to be in existence; it is that they have agreed to deceive themselves with a false view of the future times, in every respect contradictory of the truth: namely, that there neither is nor is to be an apostasy, but a glorious growing of truth and righteousness upon the earth for one thousand years before that the Lord shall come: and having this preached to them from a thousand smooth tongues, and in a thousand dulcet strains, they are cajoled into that fatal security, which nothing will break but the trump of God. They will grow blinder and blinder, more and more fierce against the truth, more and more infected with the madness of Balaam the Prophet.

This notice of Balaam stands in the very heart of that fearful description of the apostates, which we now return to study more carefully as it is laid down in the second chapter. It begins with predicting false teachers in the Church, who should deny the lordship, the ownership (δεσποτην) of Christ, and bring in other damnable heresies; such as, that He came not in our flesh: that His flesh had not in it the law of the flesh for the Spirit to overcome, lay asleep, and lap up in death. With respect to the heresy which is named, it is remarkable that the martyrs' souls, who cry from under the altar, address Christ as their Lord, (δεσποτης, despot, owner, master of slaves,) signifying that they had died for the testimony of that very truth. Now we know for what the first army of martyrs died, even

for the testimony of Christ's right of sovereignty over men and the sovereigns of men. If this be any key to the heresy named, it will prove to be that rejection of Christ's right of dominion and government which is now possessing the world, and hath now prevailed even in the constitution of this kingdom; and given way to the infidel maxim, that every man is his own lord, and save as he resigns up to another of his own consent and covenant, that other can have no authority over him. French republicanism hath supplanted Christian polity. And if the cause of this falling away be looked into a little more deeply, it will be found where this passage places it, namely, in denying that Christ by His death bought the world with His blood, that mankind are His, and that magistrates placed over them are the shepherds of His people. This truth Evangelicalism hath supplanted, to make way for the error that Christ hath only purchased the elect: and therefore, say they, what have we, what hath religion, what hath Christ, to do with worldly kings, worldly governments, and worldly people. Insatiate men! when will ye be contented with self-applause and contempt of others? I believe, as I have said, that these two truths, the flesh of Christ and the lordship of Christ, the one the demonstration of His Humanity, the other of His Divinity, are the two pillars, the Jachin and the Boaz, of the spiritual temple. By these errors, with others which enter in their train, it is said that these false prophets will so mightily prevail in the Church as to make it a shame and a disgrace to hold the truth, which is even now the case. To this they should add covetousness, self-seeking, worldly reputation, creature comfort, riches, and respectability, and deal in the merchandise of souls, getting good livings by their prostitution of the truth. For all which, the judgment of old decreed and written, should certainly and speedily come to pass. And a proof that God could and would judge His Church which had apostatised from her proper standing of grace, holiness, and self-denial, the apostle referreth to the evil angels, and to the antediluvian world, and to the cities of the plain: yet though He was most certainly to bring the judgment written of old against this apostasy, He would as certainly deliver the few faithful ones, as He had delivered Lot out of Sodom. This is, in brief, the substance of the matter. But not content with this historical sketch, he addresseth himself most patiently to describe the character of those apostates, that the Church might not, without the fullest warning, be led astray. This portrait of an apostate churchman begins at verse 10th, and consists of the following traits: the first, They walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness: the second, They despise government; upon which is given the following com-

mentary: "Presumptuous self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. The third is their covetousness, "beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices, children of curse; which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." These, their features, sensuality, liberalism, or licentiousness, and making gain of godliness, are illustrated with wonderful variety of similitudes: and the certain and miserable destruction of the apostates is foretold in fearful expressions. They are likened to the savage animals of the wood, made to be taken and destroyed; the mist of darkness is reserved for them for ever; they shall perish in their own corruption; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. The corresponding passage in Jude (for the correspondence is most remarkable) gives also three features; the first, the way of Cain; the second, the error of Balaam for reward: and the third, the gainsaying of Core: of which the two latter are certainly covetousness and insurgency, and the first is the preference of the lower and earthy and sensual man after which Cain's posterity followed in preference to the spiritual man, to which the line of Seth were more disposed. The same three temptations and wanderings of the wicked seem to be described by John under another form,—"the lust of the flesh, or sensuality; the lust of the eye, or covetousness; and the pride of life, or ambition, leading on to insubordination; and I think they are still the same with the three temptations of our Lord, the temptation of the sense, the temptation of the sight, and the pride of confidence or self-exaltation. And perhaps they are the same with the three forms of the beast in the Apocalypse; the first, the Pagan form of brutal violence; the second, the Papal form of making merchandise of souls through cunning craftiness; and the third, the infidel form of misrule and independence of all authority. However this may be, one thing clearly results from this examination,—namely, that the history of Balaam is not slightly to be passed over, but ought diligently to be studied as containing in it a remarkable type of one form of the triple wickedness which was in time to be revealed in the Christian Church. To the study of this history let us now proceed, with the feeling of those who have been directed thither by the finger of the Holy Ghost.

The passage in the epistle to the Church of Pergamos directs our attention especially to that part of Balaam's conduct wherein he acted as an evil counsellor of the king of Moab, and advised him to tempt the people whom he could not curse, and to lead astray the people whom he could not destroy. It was not for want of will that Balaam cursed them not, but for want of power: his covetousness

prompted him in all possible ways to compass the desire of Balak the king of Moab, but God withheld him; and when he utterly failed, and three several times blessed the people, and foretold how they should smite the four corners of Moab, he gave counsel to the king to tempt them by the women unto the sacrifice of Peor: "And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord," (Num. xxxi. 14–16.) The particulars of this trespass are detailed in the 25th chapter, verses 1–3: "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." This part of Balaam's conduct, being different from that which is referred to by Peter and Jude, doth only the more confirm the conclusion that, from first to last, the history of this prophet is typical of the Christian Church.

Behold, then, how it standeth in the history. The children of Israel being come to the very edge of the promised land, pitched on the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho; and the king of Moab, terrified by their approach and by the rumour of their mighty deeds, sent to Balaam, a prophet of the true God, and brought him from afar to curse the people. He sought none of the prophets of Peor whom his people served, but sent for Balaam the son of Zippor, a true prophet, in whose mouth was the word of God, but in his heart all covetous practices; out of whose mouth he heard only the truth of God, but out of his guileful heart he learned the way of leading them astray by women and winning them over to the worship of his gods. For which the Lord's anger was kindled against the people, and He thus commanded Moses: "Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord, against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor," (Num. xxv. 4, 5.) This purification by a sacrifice being accomplished, the people are numbered, the law of the conditions of the inheritance of the land is reappointed; after which Moses is commanded to "avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, or Moabites:" and this done he is "gathered unto his people," (Num. xxxi. 2.) The man of God accordingly addresseth himself to this the last of his works, and slew the kings of Midian, and Balaam along with them, all the males

also, and all the women, save those who were virgins: and of the plunder everything which could pass through the fire was with fire purified, and the rest with the water of separation, and all the people who had a hand in the war, washed their clothes and abode without the camp seven days. And thus ended the actions of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Now, even though this remarkable history had not in these three several places of the New Testament been applied to the Christian Church, I could, from its very structure, have pronounced it to be a typical history of the actings of the powers that be, against the Church, to prevent her from coming to her inheritance of the earth. The powers that be, though ordained of God, are, wherever the Gospel hath not redeemed them, the servants of Satan, who is therefore styled by our Lord the prince of this world; and the kingdoms which they govern are expressly promised and predetermined for the meek and the poor in spirit, and all who are faithful to Christ unto the death. No wonder then that Satan, the present holder, and, since Christ's victory over him, the usurper of the inheritance, should eye with dread and with malice, that Church which is destined to supplant him; the true heirs and children of the kingdom, who are ever standing on the edge of their inheritance, and waiting the day of His coming to take possession, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. To forewarn the gods, or kings, or magistrates, concerning this temptation of Satan, has been one of the chief objects of God's revelation from the beginning: and in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, the first king of kings, God showed forth in many ways, both prophetical and emblematical, the nature and history of the apostasy of His chief servants upon the earth, the kings and magistrates of the people. Of this kind also is the transaction between Balak and the Church of God. It signifies that the powers of the world, desirous to hinder and destroy the Church, would find a prophet of God, who having the truth in his mouth, but covetousness in his heart, should teach how to seduce them by harlotry from the worship of the living and true God. Which accordingly was effected in the primitive churches, as that of Corinth and others, wherein Paul writes against this corruption; and in this Church of Pergamos also. And, no doubt, it was one great form of seduction over the whole primitive Church, to amalgamate, as far as they could, both with the Jews and with the heathen. While the apostles lived, their devoted and uncompromising spirit stayed this evil disposition; which yet drew in Peter and James, and Barnabas also, but was nobly and successfully resisted by Paul. Yet even during this, the Ephesian state of

the Church, the great Shepherd had to complain of the Nicolaitanes, who followed after sensual indulgences. The persecutions which arose after the decease of the apostles, and continued throughout the Smyrna period of the Church, were the means of preventing the same evil; for the sword and the stake are not the instruments of seduction. When, however, this period concluded, and made way for the Pergamos condition of the Church, that is, from the time of Constantine forward, we are astonished chiefly at two things; the first, the orthodoxy of word pronounced by the Church in all her councils, to a noble succession of which we owe all our creeds; and, secondly, the covetousness of worldly grandeur, and worldly possessions, and worldly power, which at the same time burst forth in all parts of Christendom. Now this is exactly the state of things of which Balaam is the type; a true prophet, but a most wicked and unprincipled man. By the operation of this covetous disposition, it came to pass that various forms of idolatry, or spiritual fornication, were introduced, which Rome, gathering and cementing into one, is on that account called the mother of harlots; and, with this spiritual adultery, entered in the innumerable heathen superstitions which now deface and entirely hide the primitive forms of the Church in that apostasy. This triumph of Jezebel, the patroness of fornication, is properly the period of the Thyatira Church; but for which it is the special property of this Church to prepare the way, being the time of counsel-giving, anterior to the time of carrying into effect,—the period during which Balak, the head of temporal power, is receiving from Balaam, the true but covetous prophet, instructions how to proceed in bringing the Church low, even to the ground. It is, in one word, the action of the 13th chapter of the Apocalypse, set forth by a historical type; and behold how the hundred-forty-and-four thousand are described (xiv. 4,) as "they which were not defiled with women;" to signify that all the action of the 13th chapter is equal to, and parallel with, the action of the children of Israel, in defiling themselves with the daughters of Moab. Behold also how every one of those worshippers and followers of the beast, and false prophet, who had given way to their seductions, are destroyed in the action of the seventh vial (xix. 20, 21,) after having been variously tormented by the plagues of the preceding six, in order, if possible, to lead them to repentance. And all those of the children of Israel who had sinned with the daughters of Moab, were in like manner destroyed. And thus it is that the language of the text, and the historical type of Balaam, are to be interpreted. But, besides these real and exact coincidences, there arise many other things of consequence, as to the future, which may be laid down as conjecture, if not as positive

certainty. For example, it is the last act of the wilderness state of the Church, to overthrow Balak and Balaam; and so to destroy the apostate powers of the earth, is the last act of the Church, before she is brought into the kingdom. It is the last act of Moses, the conductor of the Church through the wilderness, who then gives up his office to Joshua, the man of war; and so thereafter I believe the Church will come, under the guidance of Christ as the man of war.

Thus unfolding the mystery of Balaam and Balak's dealings, we have been forced a little out of our method, which is to explain the literal application to the times then being, before entering either upon the historical application to the period set out by the Church of Pergamos, or upon the general application of it to all states and times of the Church. We return therefore to explain the nature of this seduction to which the Church of Pergamos stood exposed. It lay in eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, and in committing fornication. There being no records whatever concerning this Church, beyond what are contained in this epistle, we are fain to gather our information from the records of other contemporary churches, in which the same offence occurred. Peculiarly in point is the Corinthian Church, to which the apostle, in his first letter, is at great pains to give instruction upon this very temptation; and because no doubt the same circumstances produced nearly the same effects in all the Churches, let us address ourselves to these instructions, both for information concerning the particular seduction, and likewise for apostolical canons of discipline in respect of it. The subject is introduced at the 8th chapter of the First Epistle, and he enters upon it with a severe rebuke of the pride of knowledge in which it originated. The Christians, knowing the vanity and falsehood of all idolatry, had said, These meats are not altered by being offered to that which is not. A nonentity, like the Jupiter, and the Venus, and the Apollo, can have no effect upon meats and drinks; why, then, should we scruple to eat whatever is set before us? The apostle, agreeing in their reasoning, rejecteth their conclusion; for, saith he, I have others to think of beside myself, who, not having the same knowledge, may, by my example, be led to act in like manner without the same clearness of conscience, and so doing that which the conscience doth not approve they may contract guilt; and rather than thus make a weak brother to offend, I will not eat bread while the world lasteth. This is the argument of the 8th chapter, and also of the 10th, where the same subject is introduced, but treated a little differently. For now he speaks of the idols, not as to what they profess to be, but as to what they are; and he asserteth that the whole system is a system of

demon-worship, and that to mingle in their rites and to partake of their sacrifices, is to countenance and help on the idolatry against which we ought steadfastly to protest. Therefore he utterly discourageth, and, I think, interdicteth, all participation in the idol-feasts which went on in the idol-temples; but with respect to those parts of the victims offered there, which came to be sold in the shambles, and might find their way to the feasts of their unbelieving friends and neighbours, he gives them liberty to eat of them, if no brother remark upon it or be offended by it; but if so, not to eat, out of a regard to his conscience and their own edification. Now it would seem that, contrary to this sound advice of the apostle, there were other teachers who followed the way of Balaam, and out of a vain conceit of knowledge, or a licentious use of liberty, went about to encourage in the people this participation with the idolatries of the world around, to the puffing up of their own minds and the casting of a stumbling-block in the way of the Church. This, however insignificant it may appear to us to be, and determined by the apostle rather upon principles of expediency than of positive law, was, in fact, a very great question in those times, as will appear from considering the condition in which the Christian churches then stood. The Pagan was a very tolerant religion. Amongst the Romans it was so by the law and custom of the state, which, with an ample toleration and an ambitious policy, took all gods and goddesses under the wing of the Roman senate and people. To the Christian religion they would have had little or no objection, as one amongst many more, provided it would have entered into fraternal union with the rest, and not held aloof in the attitude of severe and uncompromising enmity. If the Christians would have gone up to their Pagan temples, and eaten of their feasts, and not rudely repelled the whole ceremony as false and foolish, they would have been content that the Christians should also have their own proper feasts, to which the Pagans in their turn might have been willing to lend their countenance. But this might never be, because it would have been to encourage the Pagans in that easy-hearted confidence in a delusion from which it was the very object of the Christian religion to deliver them. The Christian religion is essentially uncompromising, because it alone is true, and all others are false and wicked. For believers, to do anything but frown upon their superstitions, would have been to contradict their own belief by their practice; even as if I, believing that any one who trusteth in masses for his salvation will be damned, would be a most inconsistent and cruel-hearted man if I were to go and countenance the mass, or that superstition of which the mass is a chief part. Even as if I, believing that a man who

gives himself up to disbelief of the Lord Jesus Christ, and blasphemes God's name and His ordinances, shall surely perish, would grievously err against him and against my own soul if I were to permit him in his evil course without challenge, or join him therein. All such questions, as our attendance upon stage-plays, upon horse-races, dancing assemblies, card parties, gaming tables, and the like forms of worldly profligacy, have to be determined upon the same principles as those given by the apostle concerning idol-sacrifices and fornication. And for the same reasons those who countenance such things do err as these Balaamites did. And, if I mistake not, those who introduce into the service of the Church customs which savour of Popery commit the same offence. On this account it was that almost all the reformers of the Church of England would have had her stripped of many of those dresses and forms and names and offices which came down from the corruption of the Latin Church. But this brings us to the general bearing of the subject.

Such being the history and mystery of Balaam's dealings with Balak against the people of God, and such the verification of it in the primitive Church, and in that period of the Church history which, according to our view, answereth to the Church of Pergamos, we come next to consider wherein lies the evil of the thing itself, and in how far we are liable to, or guilty of, it in these our days. The evil consists in the accommodation of the Christian verity to the wisdom of this world, and of the Christian discipline to the prudence of this world; in the presentation unto the believers of such natural enticements and inducements as may beguile them from the simplicity and purity of their spiritual faith and conversation. The first principle of the school of Christ is, that, in order to learn any of its lessons, in order to become His disciples, we must first have forsaken father and mother and brother and sister, and our own life also; and thus sitting at His feet, denuded of nature's chief delights, denied to nature's daily affections, we may surely expect to make progress in the house of Christ, and to become vessels unto honour, and meet for the Master's use. This, which is the first principle of the Christian Church, is also the vital principle of it—in which it must live and move and breathe and have its being. The natural man must continue to be denied, mortified, crucified, buried under the power and mastery of the spiritual man: they are deadly enemies, and can live only in the suppression and destruction of one another. Therefore it is that baptism, the initiatory act, done, as it were, upon the threshold of the Church, is the off-stripping and down-laying of the natural man, that we may enter into the temple and do its offices in the spiritual man, by whom spiritual things are discerned, spiritual

duties performed, and spiritual enjoyments partaken. It is like the Rabbinical notion that Enoch and Elijah left their bodies outside the wall of heaven: the baptized leave their bodies outside of the Church; and no longer having the organ for natural ideas and occupations, to all such they are concluded dead, and ought ever so to be. But, because this is a work of the believing soul, of the spirit-possessed will, ever willing to put down and keep down the natural man with his corruptions and lusts, and not the very annihilation of his being, nor his change into another state where he hath no offensive inclinations—its completeness at any time, and its continuance at all times, dependeth upon the entireness of our heart towards God, and the complete subjection of our mind to the Holy Ghost; and this, as being an act of our will, dependeth upon the co-operation therein of our willingness with the willingness of God, or, as the Scripture better expresseth it, upon our "being fellow-workers with God"—which being relaxed, straightway the enemy is upon us, and riding over our heads. Whensoever therefore any one for himself, or for another, doth dress up an affection or an object of the natural man in such fascinating attire as to darken and blind the perception, or deceive the judgment of the spiritual man, he is chargeable with the wickedness reproved in our text, of casting a stumblingblock before the people of God, of causing them to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. The natural man is the origin of idolatry, and affords the sacrifices which are meet to idolatry; and for a spiritual man to turn from the love of God with the whole heart and soul and strength and mind to the love of any natural object, is to commit adultery: for every member of his body had been married unto Christ, and cannot but by adultery be joined to the world, which is the enemy of Christ. There is a love indeed toward everything which hath a being,—such love as that wherewith the Creator loveth all His creatures, a purely spiritual love, a truly catholic love, of which the Church is the blessed possessor, and with which her every word and work should be inspired. This, however, is not a devotedness of heart unto them, for the spiritual heart is devoted only unto God and godliness—it is a love of them as creatures of the Almighty's hand, and a burning desire that they should be reclaimed to the Almighty's service, and so attain their own blessedness. But when, instead of this holy love, this godlike love of all His creatures, there entereth into the heart an affection for the creature itself, a love of it unmingled with pity for it, a love of its enjoyment unmingled with hatred of its sin, a wedded espoused love; it is rank fornication, it is adultery of the heart, it is worshipping the creature instead of the Creator, it is idolatry, and very evil

in the sight of God, for which wrath cometh upon the children of disobedience.

Now, if I do not greatly err, there is much, very much, of this evil intermixture of the unholy with the holy; much, very much, of this prostration of the Spirit before the beautiful and goodly forms of nature, in this our generation of the Church. Beauty of discourse is very much affected by the preachers, and sought after by the people; strength of natural reasoning very much depended upon for the establishment of the truth, for the confutation of the error; views intelligible to the natural man are craved, and views only intelligible to the spiritual man are nauseated; power of argumentation to put down error, controversial weapons for humbling an adversary, knowledge in every kind rather than charity; talents rather than graces; gifts of nature more than gifts of the Holy Ghost, are everywhere in request. I am set for the speaking of truth, and woe is unto me if I speak not the truth: therefore I take up my burden and proceed. Satire and wit and scorn and ridicule are brought into the Church's temple, and made to do the service thereof. A great name, a numerous following, much wealth, and great respectability are the very sinews of the professing Church. Political partizans are enlisted into the service; and the organs of political parties, newspapers are used to blaspheme the truth, and their service is hailed as an auspicious omen of the renovated age. By which means the Church is become a miserable receptacle of all odious passions and prejudices; a whited sepulchre, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of dead men's bones. The men who are thus with a high hand introducing carnal weapons of warfare, and erecting beautiful forms of natural reason and imagination in the house of God, are guilty of the sin of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of iniquity.

Above all other bodies in the Church those are liable to this evil, who adopt the false doctrine, the most pernicious and abominable doctrine, that God loves only the elect, and loves not the rest of mankind; and that when giving the manifestation of His love, in sending His Son to be the propitiation of our sins, He did contemplate the elect only, for whom Christ died, and not for all the world. This doctrine which seems to be so severely holy, like all errors on the side of sanctimoniousness, ends in the destruction of sanctity. For man having in him bowels of mercies and yearnings of love to all men, and strong sympathies with all natural objects, and being under this doctrine forcibly deprived thereof by the duty which he owes to God, finds out secret channels of self-deception by which he may indulge it. The lie, the very great lie, that God hath not

loved all, and died for all in Christ Jesus, but only for a part of men, necessarily forceth the believer of it, into the same form of spirit, to love and sacrifice Himself only for a part of men. It becomes the sanctification of schism, the great generator of division upon the face of the earth; as may be seen at this day in my own poor country and Church, where they can agree about nothing, but fight about everything, save the persecution of the truth, to which they are wondrously accordant. Instead of obtaining from God a license to love all His creatures without partaking of their unholiness, this most pernicious doctrine obtains a license only to love a part, and a positive prohibition from loving the rest. But as I said, man's heart cannot do this and be happy. There is a craving in him for the catholic; there is an inclination in him towards all. Religion, true religion, the religion of Jesus Christ, shows him such love in God, and enables him to attain to the fellowship of it, whereby his soul is exceedingly comforted; and needs no secret subterfuges for gratifying itself; but walks in love and liberty, and holiness, over the wide and waste world; blessing all with the presence of a god-like person. But that schismatic principle tolerating no such generous and universal benevolence, leaves the heart without its object, and sends it into every devious path to seek it. And so you find, amongst the falsely called spiritual party who thus believe, the greatest appetite for natural talents, for natural beauty of sentiment, for metaphysical subtleties, for men of rank, title, and influence, together with all sorts of expedients to carry their ends into execution. What they aim at, numbers, is a great show in the flesh, a majority in the courts of the Church; which being obtained, then woe, woe to the faith; they will not leave a man who dares avow it standing in his place. These are all fruits of the flesh; stumbling-blocks which they are casting in the way of the faithful in Christ Jesus; and if they repent not, Christ will come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth.

Such is the radical principle and general form of the evil reproved under the figure of Balaam; but it hath yet a more specific form and application which it would be wrong to omit, and unkindness not to specify to this our own generation of the Church, with whom especially we living men have to do. The special form of the wickedness in the text is, that the prophet should teach the king how to lead God's people astray, that the Church should teach the State how to destroy God's people in the land. This evil office, being fulfilled, as we have seen, by the Christian Church, after the era of persecution, brought in the supremacy of Babylon, the mother of harlots. It hath been always the way which the hypocritical and false church

hath taken to put out of sight the faithful and true. For example, when the Chaldeans, who were the religionists of Babylon, wrought with Nebuchadnezzar to set up the golden image upon the plain of Dura, and to require all to worship it; they gave a historical emblem of what the worldly part of the Church have ever and will ever do, while Satan hath any hold of this earth. And every one in the Church who is unregenerate, is as ready for the devil's service in this matter as these Chaldeans were. How diligent, for example, during the last century, were what is called the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland, to misrepresent the faithful and true ministers as not so well disposed to the powers that be, as fomenters of resistance amongst the people; by which false teaching of the counsellors of the king, they almost overwhelmed the faithful in the Church. How steadily again did the bishops in the Church of England, during the same period, prevent by all means the introduction of ministers holding higher doctrine than their own vile Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism. In both these instances, they did the part of Balaam, the son of Bosor, and though some of them might do it without any covetous motive, I believe that the generality will be found to have their eye upon the good things which Balak the king hath to bestow; the good livings, the places and preferments in the Church. These last forty years, which have changed all things, have wrought a very great change here also. The opposition and antagonism of those two parties is fast dying away: they are far nearer to each other, than old prejudices will allow them to believe; and they only want a common cause far enough removed from the old battle-ground, to rush into each other's arms, and unite their forces against the truth. There is nearly as much worldliness in the spirit of the one party as of the other, though in the one it be less cunningly disguised; and wherever the prophets are natural men, or being spiritual, are but babes in Christ, and at the same time strong in carnality, they are ever ready to serve Satan in stirring up the State against the prophets who minister the word of the Lord to the wants of the spiritual people of the Lord. Now, I do see such a bright and clear shining out of truth upon these three great and all-inclusive heads, the unchangeable love of the Father, the work of the Son in the flesh, to reconcile all flesh unto God, the work of Christ in the Spirit to redeem the Church from the power of all evil, and to present her holy and victorious in the day of His coming, as must stir up the jealousy of those who are contented with the present condition of their several sects and parties, and must lead them to combine with one accord to extinguish the light. It is manifest to me at this moment in our Church, that the coalition is formed of

religionists and worldlings, of Evangelical and Moderate, of Churchmen and Seceders, of Presbyterians and Episcopalians and Independents, of infidels and believers, against those who hold fast these great heads of truth,—the universal love of God, the fallen flesh of Christ, the mighty work in the Spirit, and the glorious advent; and that it will labour most diligently to awaken the hostility of public opinion, to excite the odium and horror of the people, to alienate the possessors of power and government, from those who hold the truth, to prevent them from places and stations of authority in the Church and kingdom, to cast them out from those which they possess, and otherwise to impede the work of God by all the means in their power. I believe this condition of things to be already in existence, and no one knows how rapid its progress will be. For my own part, I should not be surprised to see the Church using all her authority to deprive the State of the services of every faithful minister who holds these great points of truth; and if so, they shall then have consummated in Protestant Britain that profane union between Church and State, for the suppression of the faithful, and for the misguidance of all men, which heretofore was accomplished in Papal Europe, and we shall come into the condition of being included in and mixed up with the rest of the Apostasy. At this moment I perceive the prophets of all denominations most diligently traducing the preachers of the truth, casting stumbling-blocks before the people of God, and leading them away from the true spiritual doctrines, to those intermixtures and intermarriages between the carnal and the spiritual which God abominates.

I perceive in the Church of Scotland and the Church of England a distinct and a common form of this evil practice, which it would be very unfaithful and unkind in me not to open and reprove. The evil in the former is her systematic theology and legal jurisprudence, as distinguished from the multiplicity of sensible forms in the latter, such as priests' dresses, pictures, organs, kneeling, crossing, bowing, and the like; the one addressing the natural reason, the other the natural sense of man. Our systematic theology, so much countenanced by and embodied in the Westminster Confession, I regard as a very great stumbling-block both to ministers and people, leading them to fancy that they know the truth when they are familiar with its signs, and apt at the use of them in theological argument or discourse from the pulpit. And our very exact legal jurisprudence has introduced into our courts of discipline the rigour of law instead of the mildness of charity, and the zealotry of party instead of the protection of catholic love. I have no hesitation in saying, that the spirit of party, in which for a long time almost every presbytery,

synod, and general assembly of the Church have met, and in which almost every member of them hath deliberated and spoken, has done more to banish the Spirit of God from the meetings of the elders, than all the false doctrines, erroneous principles, and unworthy characters, which have found access there. In the pulpit, systematic theology, abstract terms, the algebra of religion, and in the courts, the spirit of law and of party, have done most awful injury to the Church, from which I fear there is no hope of her recovering herself. These are the cunning seductions with which so many ministers are continually snared and ensnaring others. Mine it is not to meddle so much with the Church of England, although in what I write, I write out of charity alone: but this I do most certainly perceive that the pomp and state of bishops, the secular offices of the parish clergy as magistrates, their pluralities and non-residences, the numerous ceremonies, and the rigid adherence to printed forms, are a stumbling-block to the people. No one that hath not reflected on it, or made the experiment, can believe how the one nation is locked up in the understanding, and the other in the sense, and hindered from entering into the things of the Spirit. A religion is presented to them, to which they think that they themselves can bring no small share of the materials. Their following of the argument, their perceiving of the proper word in its proper place, their recognising of the orthodox sentences, their amens and answers and genuflexions, and other exercises of the natural man, work sad effects in beguiling them from that simple reliance upon God and Jesus Christ, which is the sum and substance of religion, and the common evil which under this head I have to lament is, their giving false instruction to the State. By their continual courting of the powers that be, they do more than all others besides to make the powers that be look upon religion merely as a State engine, which they can work for the ends of worldly policy. However much in the canons of the Church it be maintained that the State hath no power to interfere in the ordering of the Church, and how many soever martyrs may have died for that testimony, it is no less true, that the bare adulation of the authorities for the patronage which they possess doth completely throw the Church into their arms, to do with her whatsoever they please. The see of Rome had as good canons to show, and as full a martyrology, yet did this not prevent her from becoming the base paramour of the empire: no more will the canons and constitutions of the churches of Britain prevent the same catastrophe from coming to pass. See in a late instance what wretched and abominable counsel was given to the State by both churches in the matter of the Papacy, when they either advised, or did not, as churchmen,

oppose that apostasy, from being laid like an incubus upon the breast of this over-burthened country. Their ignorance and their slavishness sold the kingdom into the hands of its enemies. And worse things are preparing. And you will find that the State will act in concert with her right-trusty and well-beloved churchmen, to resist and suppress the voice of truth and the true worshippers within the land. God grant that my fears may not be realised! Not many years will determine. Even now a reformed liturgy begins to be talked of. It will be done beyond question by the advice and with the consent of the lords spiritual. In all this I am not reasoning against an establishment of religion, but pointing out the way in which the regularly-ordained ministers of the Word are fulfilling the evil part towards the State, which Balaam did to Balak; whereby many are offended. Heretofore, out of this, more than out of all other things put together, arose the disputes and secessions which now destroy the unity of this kingdom, and tear up the very vitals of its peace. Out of imposed ceremonies, made into a term of communion, they arose in England; out of the patronage of the State, ill-gotten and used to oppress the inalienable rights of the people, the secession arose in Scotland. And both of these have now come to imbibe the spirit of direct enemies and antagonists of the churches, which, notwithstanding all their faults, I uphold as true churches of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE NICOLAITANES.

Besides these doctors of Balaam's school, there were also others of the school of the Nicolaitanes, whom the angel permitted to be at ease and to propagate their sensual doctrines in the city of his habitation; against whom he was not stirred up like the angel of the Ephesian Church with a hatred congenial with that in which they were held by the Universal Bishop of Christendom, the Head of all the Churches. Twice over doth Christ say, "Which thing I hate." And He commendeth well His minister in Ephesus because he likewise hated their deeds. But the over-gentle angel of Pergamos permitted them even to hold their doctrine unmolested; for which, and for the other evil doctrine which he allowed, his Master is so indignant that He commands him to repent, or else He will come unto him quickly and fight against them with the breath of His mouth.

I have nothing to add to what was set forth in the fourth Lecture concerning the doctrine and deeds of the Nicolaitanes; everything being said there which is surely known. All that can be affirmed is, that it was of that sensual character which grew up alongside of the doctrine of grace and forgiveness, and nourished itself by physical

pictures and representations of the paradise which is prepared for the people of God in the millennial kingdom of His saints. Several who are engaged in the evil work of resisting the hope of Christ's coming and kingdom now set forth to the Church by many of His servants, attempt to fasten those gross sensualities which in the time of John prevailed, and have been handed down to us by the name of Cerinthianism, upon the doctrine of a real bodily presence of Christ and His saints at the beginning of the thousand years, and a real substantial kingdom by them established upon the earth. But though beyond question this, like every other doctrine of the truth, is capable of being wrested, and, because of its being of the truth, is diligently wrested by Satan and wicked men to their own destruction; yet can it with no justice be alleged that the gross sensualities into which the first heretics fell had their origin in this cause; but for the most part, as those skilled in ecclesiastical history know, from fundamental errors concerning the nature of good and evil, and concerning the true flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deriving from the Greek schools of philosophy, and from the still older fountain of the eastern magi, false and fantastical notions concerning the body and the soul; they greatly undervalued the former, vilified it, and could not bring themselves to believe that Christ's body was really composed of the bare elements of flesh and blood, but of some spiritual, celestial, or sidereal substance which assumed the shows and appearances of suffering and death, but was totally incapable of being troubled by ought which man could inflict. This being once admitted, the flesh came to be looked upon as a thing incapable of redemption or obedience to any Divine law of holiness; forasmuch as Christ avoided it, and would have no fellowship with it. It must be left to work on in its own wickedness, and religion must be placed in knowledge, (Gnosticism,) in community of goods, of wives, and everything else whatever. The basis of all flesh-mortification and body-sacrifice is in this, that the Godhead did take it as we have it, and make it to be holy as He would have us to make it. He subjected and subordinated it by Incarnation to the holy will of God; and thereby subjected and subordinated all nature, visible and invisible, whereof man is the created lord. Thus believing, I am armed against the flesh with power of faith to bring it under, to present my whole body a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God, and to prove in myself what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. This great point of doctrine being now denied by the great body of the evangelicals,—at least so far as appears, and there was made of late a fearful demonstration against it, they can no longer preach man capable of a real holiness, the holiness which is by faith;

they do not believe that the Son of God ever dwelt in flesh under the law of flesh, or that He did prevail over that law, and how can they believe that He will do it in their case. At the best it can only be a conventional or pharisaical holiness, that which may be produced by the fear of man, and by the dread of hell, not that which can be produced by the reality of an indwelling God. If this sect which denies that Christ took very flesh under the law of flesh and brought it into obedience to the law of the Spirit,—for it is only a sect and not the Church which can deny that truth,—if this schismatic faction in the Church prevail through general ignorance and apathy by their noise and numbers to establish their false doctrine, then I prognosticate such a deluge of pharisaical cruelty, scorn, and wickedness in the Church as these lands hath never yet seen. The denial of Christ's work in the flesh, the doctrine that it was not our flesh which He took and sanctified, amounts to the affirmation that our flesh admits not of sanctification; and has little or nothing to do with true holiness, seeing that Christ the holy One would have nothing to do with it, and conditioned that it should be transubstantiated before He would take it into the fellowship of His divinity. This falsehood was the chief root of those Nicolaitane sensualities to which the heretics of the primitive Church were addicted.

It is true that this concurring with the heresy of Hymeneus and Philetus, (for no heresy can stand alone,) namely, that the resurrection was past already—not the general resurrection, for to believe so of this before death passeth the extravagance even of heresy, but the first resurrection proper to the people of God, with which chiefly or entirely the primitive Church was exercised either in the way of orthodoxy or heterodoxy—I say the heresy that the first resurrection is past, that it is but a figure, as our moderns preach, for the regeneration of the soul, being introduced into the primitive Church, full of the faith, hope, and desire of the millennium, did necessarily bring with it these Cerinthian or Nicolaitane crudities and sensualities in which the early heretics indulged themselves. For the joys of that estate being described in Scripture by every natural appetite, as of eating and drinking, and ruling and enjoying, so soon as they got themselves persuaded that the first resurrection was past in the act of the regeneration, they immediately concluded that to them the thousand years of abundant enjoyment was begun, and so they plunged into it with their flesh all around them, and were taken in the devil's snare. Our modern evangelicals make no scruple to hold, with Hymeneus and Philetus, that the resurrection is past already in our regeneration; but they are preserved from the banquets and indulgences by having no faith of any kind whatever in the millen-

nium, except that it is an improved state of society during which their bodies are in the unconsciousness of death, and their souls in heaven. Thus the two errors most fortunately neutralise one another; because, in truth, there is no faith either upon the first resurrection or the millennium, and therefore it is of no consequence to them whether they believe one way or another.

But the origin of these Nicolaitane errors was still deeper, in that abuse of the doctrines of grace which is known by the name of Antinomianism, but were better designated by the name of Antichristianism, (for it is not the law, but Christ, it opposeth,) and which by the apostle is thus stated: "Let us sin that grace may abound." Men, not understanding the nature of their own being, nor realising their theological system in the conscience, are astonished how the doctrine of no law, and no imputation of sin, and constant, continual forgiveness, should be compatible with repentance, holiness, and the habitual obedience of all God's commandments. And many there be at this day who, in their ignorance and error, have impugned the doctrine of universal atonement and pardon, as being full of all licentiousness. Now conceive men with such inadequate views of gospel truth to be, by some means or other, brought to receive the doctrine of God's continual forgiveness and non-imputation of sin; and the result would be to open all the flood-gates of wickedness, and to make God the patron of all iniquity. You have only to suppose that the doctors, who in this day are vainly striving against universal atonement, to receive from Scripture, or demonstration of the preacher, or by some other means, the true doctrine, while they are in their present carnal state, and the result would be, what they themselves so cogently and eloquently have set forth, a thorough confusion of the good with the evil, the removal of all incentives to holiness, and, in one word, the subversion of all morality. Such was the state of Simon Magus and the early heretics, who, being still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, yet, perceiving the demonstration of the Spirit and power which accompanied certain preachers of certain doctrines, were fain to receive them into their unsanctified intellect, not as spiritual truths, but as abstract conceptions; and the consequence was the revelation of them in the sense by all manner of excesses,—the more violent the better, because, according to their excessive violence, the firmness and the strength of their faith was demonstrated. It is only the total absence of faith as a principle, and the substitution of theological terms instead of spiritual truths, which prevent the intellectualism of the Church in this day from revealing itself in the same sensual indulgences. It is not our religion,

but our social habits, good police, and oversight of public opinion, which keeps our manners in that punctual condition in which they are found, from which when we escape by removing to other lands, behold into what fearful irreligion and wickedness even the children of our Church, privileged above all others, fall! It is punctuality and not principle, the dread of consequences here or hereafter, not the righteousness of faith, which keeps us decent as we are. In the primitive age, when there existed no such restraints as Christianity hath produced in the world, no standard of morals, no sense of decorum, no force of public opinion, everything depended upon the principles which a man held concerning God and duty; and when the natural man adopted, for he cannot receive, the doctrines of God's forgiveness of all sins and non-imputation of any sin, of the flesh being put to death and buried, and the spiritual man quickened, who cannot sin, of God's calling upon His people to rejoice in the community of the saints, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, he became, as it were, intoxicated with his liberty, sin became sanctified, wickedness commanded, and all his inclinations gratified to the uttermost. And so were produced those hideous practices in the worship of God, of which the very narrative splits a modern ear with horror. How much or how little of these sensualities the Nicolaitanes adopted we have no further means of ascertaining than from the "Stromata" of Clement, which we have quoted in our Fourth Lecture; but doubtless it was to this type of heresy that they belonged. Of these there are traces in all the churches to which the apostolic epistles are addressed; and therefore it is they are so particular in enumerating the open breaches of morality, and condemning them, such as fornication, theft, uncleanness, and so forth, which now are topics seldom adverted to but in the police report. In truth, Christianity had to form a police, a law, a sentiment, a feeling, and everything else which now are wardens around the common weal, and those writings which feed the Church have therefore continual reference to such excesses and enormities. There was the breaking in of mankind; the rough work of reclaiming men from the most abominable wickedness to the most delicate saintliness. No wonder that some should prove refractory—that all in whom the natural man ruled should prove so—and set up a head against the holy Jesus and His holy apostles, against the Holy Ghost, and the doctrine and discipline of the Church. To preserve from such roots of bitterness the flock of Christ was the very intention of His placing delegates in those cities, and this office He expected them faithfully and diligently to fulfil.

THE THREATENING.

In this function the angel of the Church of Pergamos had notably failed, and therefore the Lord enjoins him to "repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The Lord regards His sufferance of such sensual and worldly doctrines as a high offence not to be passed over, but to be reproved, and, if not repented of, to be chastened and punished. He therefore calls upon His messenger to change His mind, and seek a holier and severer spirit, to think less of his own ease and more of his Master's glory, to think less of pleasing men, and more of pleasing God, to awaken from his sluggish rest, and go forth as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, against the enemies of His cross. What a lesson to the multitude of pastors who are content to sit still in their towns and villages, cities, and kingdoms, and permit the rankest heresy and most abominable wickedness to be propagated beside and around them. If I understand anything concerning the nature of an Established Church, it is constituted as well for the guardianship of sound doctrine, as for the exercise of ministerial and pastoral offices, within the king's dominions, whereby an obligation resteth upon every one of the ministers to stir up his gifts against every form of error which may arise, and by every spiritual weapon to root it out. The members of the Church are as much the king's soldiers for the defence of truth, as the army and navy are for the defence of the person and honour of the king, and for the safety of the kingdom. There is a large and wide field of valiant enterprise in the service of the kingdom upon which every young minister is called upon to win for himself a high degree in the Church of Christ. In thus speaking of the obligations of Christians, considered as established by the State, our object is merely to show the extent to which this duty of superintending the true faith, lies upon every one, and not to interpose any third party between us and the Master whom we serve. Nevertheless, though we stand directly bound as angels or messengers unto Him who sent us to represent Himself, He doth so order it in His providence, as that we should in our obedience both honour the magistrate's dignity, and also the communion and fellowship of the catholic Church; the one by the reverence and observance of the power which hath established the Church for great ends of the nation's well-being, the other by our reverence and obedience of the ecclesiastical government of which we are a part. I judge, therefore, that Christ, in calling upon this angel of Pergamos to repent, doth call upon almost every minister of His within our land, to repent of the like tolerance of erroneous doctrine, the same obsequiousness to

the various sects which exist in the country as heads of error. In these last days the weapons of controversy for the truth have been dropped, and a spurious amalgamation of all parties with one another hath been introduced under the pretence of charity, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, and hath sympathy of joy only with the truth. The cold and frowning aspect in which, before these times, the Church stood towards all sects, who, by separating, had signified that there were some very important errors in the Church for which she was not to be endured, though it savoured of uncharitableness and pride, and might often favour those fruits of the flesh, did yet arise from the most excellent desire of maintaining the unity of the truth, and the unity of the Church, and was intended as a testimony against the false doctrine, or schismatical spirit in which these separations arose, and by which they were maintained. I have already blamed the Church for casting stumbling-blocks in the way of God's people, by introducing as terms of communion, what ought never to have been advanced to such a degree; but when Satan, taking advantage of this error, did drive others into the greater error of separating from a Church which held the true doctrine and discipline, and of forming another, and yet not another, for no other can there be than one Church, she was called upon to reprove this transgression, and to show her high dissatisfaction with all who followed such divisive courses. And thus she did, and continued to do until the days arrived for building walls with untempered mortar, when all at once a general cry arose for amalgamating into one, without any regard to the great points of truth, for the testimony of which each party conceived itself to be set. And into one they rushed, even not to the exclusion of the Socinian or the Infidel, or the notorious evil-liver, provided they were willing to lend a hand in the holy alliance, as they deemed it, for converting the world. Ah me! what a rushing into the battle without counting the host. This straightway introduced a devout and pious hatred of all controversy, an avoidance of all doubtful ground, a voluntary silence upon all disputed questions, a spirit of accommodation and toleration which admitted Roman Catholics on the one hand, and Socinians on the other; and otherwise to proceed, became quite intolerable, and was treated as savouring of an evil spirit. This habit of the times has brought almost every minister in the Church, especially of those who are called Evangelical, under the charge of the angel of Pergamos, unto all whom, as unto him, Christ saith, "Repent, or else I come quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." For my own part I have taken my Lord's admonition to heart, and am resolved from henceforth to gird on my armour of war, and go forth to

the combat. The enemies are very many and strong, and of our own household; but He that is with us is greater than all who can be against us. I call upon every one to do the same. I urge it upon them by the commands of their Lord and Master, and I enforce it upon the consideration presented to the angel of Pergamos; that if they do not, Christ will come quickly, and fight against the enemies of the truth with the sword of His mouth.

It is very instructive to observe how the threatening is addressed not against the angel directly, who held the truth himself, but against the members of his charge, who were abiding in the error. Through them, through his affection for them, the angel is wounded, as a father is stricken by the affliction and death of his children. Though he had forgotten his love and duty to them, so far as to allow them to remain in soul-destroying error, the Lord will not indulge him in this distance and estrangement, but treats with him, and threatens to deal with him all the same as if his heart was entire before Him, and perfect in its love to his children. There is something, to my mind, very beautiful in this, and most remarkably illustrative of the perseverance of God in the way of His ordinances. Let the minister neglect the people, and the people neglect their minister, God will still deal with both according to the relation of minister and people; threatening him with the wounding of that love which, whether he feel it or not, he ought ever to feel. This adhesiveness of God to His appointed ordinances, civil or ecclesiastical, domestic or public, is the stability of the world. Generation is thereby enabled to learn, from the experience of generations past, age from the experience of youth; and the world is preserved from utter dissolution. There is an inflexibility in the laws of the Divine government, which permits them to be calculated upon, and to become the subjects of hope and fear, of pursuit and of avoidance. There is also a continual opening for repentance, and returning to the ways of righteousness. How long soever you may have neglected or contravened the ordained laws of your office and station in the Church and State, they remain unaltered by your transgression, they are as generous and as gracious as ever; and if at any time, through the evils incident upon neglect or transgression, you are brought to feel your error, and to desire the better way of righteousness, you have but to return, like the prodigal son, and, lo! your Father's heart and your Father's home are the same as when you left them, to go astray after the imaginations of your own heart. We ministers, therefore, who have permitted roots of bitterness to spring up in the midst of the flock, and sects of various names and errors to rise up beside us, to whom we have given the right hand of fellowship, without considering the false and

schismatical doctrines for which they have erected a banner, if we will now take these people into more loving consideration, and do our endeavour to root out the errors by which they are destroyed, and expose the corruptions of which they are taken captive, shall find our great Shepherd as ready to help and to approve us as heretofore, so wondrous is His grace and forgiveness, so ever open is the door of repentance, with pardon written over it in letters of blood.

But if we will allow our people to be carried away by the licentiousness of the world, by conformity to its covetous and ungodly customs on the one hand, and on the other by the spirit of liberalism to all parties and professions, saying, "Let us be, and we will let you be," it will come to pass, that, upon these our poor indulged people, God will bring His sword, and that speedily, to do the work of chastisement and discipline which we had not heart enough to do. It is painful to look on sores, but they must both be looked upon and dressed before they can be healed. I know who have seen affliction, what a trial of courage and affection it is, to look into the grievous sores either of the body or of the soul, and patiently to treat them with the oft painful remedies which are required; and how much easier and pleasanter it is to smooth the matter up, and to suppose that all is well. But, alas! soon nature takes upon herself the physician's neglected place, and by one of her mighty and strong efforts, which end either in cure or death, she labours to throw off the accumulation of evil with which she is distressed. And so also doth nature's kind and wise Redeemer. When the pastoral care, and the discipline of the Church, have not prevented the growth of evil and gangrenous matters in the members of His body, He himself, rather than they should perish, comes with His sword, and executes the office of the Judge, that they may not be condemned with the world. This coming with the sword to fight against the holders and practisers of error, I therefore regard as a last effort of the great Shepherd to prevent the sad consummation of apostasy. It is in the heart of epistles to the churches, that this is written; and the sword is a part of His attire who is their Bishop, and it is used against His own people: I conclude, therefore, that it is not for destruction as yet, but for loving chastisement that it is used. Of this there are many instances in the Scriptures, and particularly two in the First Epistle to the Corinthians; the one an individual, the other a general instance.

The particular instance is that recorded, in the fifth chapter, of a person who was living in incestuous fornication with his father's wife, concerning whom the apostle delivereth sentence in these

words: "Deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord," (1 Cor. v. 5.) Again, referring to the same person, he saith, "What have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," (ver. 12, 13.) And in reference to this same person I think it is written in the Second Epistle, (ii. 6–11,) in language of consolation and forgiveness to him personally, and of instruction to the Church concerning his readmission to their communion. From this instance it is manifest that, even in the extremest case of discipline, the power of the sword is used not for destruction of the soul, but for destruction of the flesh, to the saving of the soul. And accordingly the excommunication service of the Church proceeds upon this principle. They are cut off in the flesh, but still united in the spirit; they are the subject of continual prayer in the churches, and of studious avoidance by the people, to the end that they may taste the bitterness of their condition, and earnestly crave peace and restoration to the bosom of the faithful. This is the true meaning of excommunication, an outward and visible separation, for the chastisement and destruction of that fleshly nature which hath offended, to the end that the spiritual communion may be restored and preserved unimpaired. This is the individual case; and for the general one it is to be found in the 11th chapter, which treateth of the communion of the Lord's Supper, in the observance of which the Corinthian Church had greatly erred by introducing both pride and sensuality into that most humbling and spiritual ordinance. Whereupon he commandeth that every one should examine or prove himself, and be satisfied in his own conscience that he is not profaning that blessed service with unholy ideas and practices; for if so, he is profaning the body and blood of Christ, which were present therein under the symbols of bread and wine. Then he addeth, that the person who eateth and drinketh in an unworthy or unsuitable manner did eat and drink judgment to himself; and straightway he proceeds to explain what this judgment is, and how executed. "Because of this among you many are weak, and sickly, and many sleep." These are all judgments in the flesh to weaken and destroy it, because it had led the spirit astray from the right use of that holy ordinance. The flesh had offended; it should have been kept under; it should never have arisen after baptism into life or action; and because faith had not prevailed to put it down, Christ would take discipline in His own hand, and use it for the purposes of grace and mercy to the spirits of His people. That it was in grace and mercy these sicknesses and

weaknesses and deaths were sent over the Corinthian Church, is manifest from what follows: "For if we judged (discerned) ourselves, we would not be judged (excerned, or singled out for judgment.) When judged, however, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." And then he proceeds to tell them how to go about the Lord's Supper, in a becoming and inoffensive manner. Now nothing can be more clearly demonstrative of this, that judgments in the flesh are inflicted by Christ, as discipline to prevent the soul from perishing under the load of carnality. That they are not necessary to a Christian's prosperity, but resorted to by the good Lord in extremity, that His people may not perish; and doubtless we are to believe that by such weaknesses, sicknesses, and deaths, the souls of His people are saved. The exercise proveth profitable, the flesh is weakened, the spirit is strengthened, the victory is won—won, perhaps, in death, to be enjoyed through eternity. This whole declaration casteth a clear light to me upon the passage of the Epistle to the Church of Pergamos, "I will come and fight against thee with the sword of my mouth;" as much as to say, If you, the angel of the Church, will not see after these offences and offenders, I will be fain to come myself, and fight against them with my sword, sending amongst them diseases and weaknesses and death, to the end of curing them of their sensualities, and saving their souls alive, that they may not be condemned with the wicked.

Being thus explained, the threatening teaches us some most important lessons; the first of which is the advantage of ecclesiastical discipline, as the great means of preventing adversities of various kinds, infirmities, diseases, and premature deaths, losses, crosses, and calamities of every kind, which are Christ's method of supplying the want of it. He will not let His Church, or any member of His Church, perish for lack of discipline; and if the angels of the churches shrink from their duty herein He will not. He will take His sword and apply it wisely, though severely, to the eradication out of the flesh of those remaining roots by which it continues to hold on in life, and nourish evil fruits. I do not say that a Christian ought invariably thus to judge of his trials in his flesh, or in his family, or in his estate; but he would do well on all such occasions to consider, whether by that thing which he is denied the use and enjoyment of, he hath not been sowing to the flesh, and choking the good seed of the Spirit. Certainly a Church which is neglectful of discipline may surely expect great reverses and trials of this kind, so long as there is any life of God in it. The second lesson is Christ's redemption of all disease, affliction, and bereavement, so as to make them

instruments of good to the spirits of His people. So that a believer may say always of such trials, They are sent to me for my spiritual advancement and growth in grace. Christ is in them, and the devil is out of them. In which sense all things are ours, whether life or death. It is very beautiful to witness how these stings and forerunners of death, which the flesh is liable to by reason of Adam's sin, Christ hath caught hold of, in order to weaken and destroy that flesh, that the spiritual man may be more and more strengthened day by day. The third lesson is, that if we would escape sufferings in our persons, and in our family, and in our estate, we should guard against all the fruits of the flesh of whatever kind; for fruits can only spring from roots, and roots cannot be extracted without suffering and pain. Baptism puts the flesh to death. It should never again lift its head; if it do, it doth so only through defect of our faith in Christ Jesus, with whom we are united as living members by the unity of the Spirit. And being so united, He who in His own flesh made sin to cease can make it to cease also in us, yet not without the exercise of faith, or the use of the Holy Ghost. Those, indeed, who say He did not put fleshly temptations to a spiritual death, but had them put to a physical death already to His hand, cannot conclude or believe that He will do so in them; and must flounder on between good and evil, and remain in the slough of despondency all their life. Not so with the believer of Christ's work in the flesh. He hath assurance of his flesh already deadened in Christ; he believes upon this as a thing already done for all flesh; and, thus believing, he feels that verily it has been done, by proving liberty in his own person from its bondage. Let him then be careful to perfect his faith, or rather to keep in perfect faith, for it is as natural for faith to be perfect in the first as in the after stages of it; and he shall be in the way of escaping many sore amputations and eradications, outward bereavements and adversities, which otherwise he must needs undergo. For Christ will not leave His people in the indulgence of any fleshly sins; He will both discover and dig out the roots of bitterness, and, cost what it may, He will deliver His people from them. And the last lesson is to bless Him for being at such pains with us, as to act the part of the chirurgeon and physician as well as of the pastor: that He will fulfil every duty which is proper to the Saviour; that He will not lose any of the people whom the Father hath numbered into Him, but will by all means perfect them.

THE SPIRIT'S PROMISE.

We come now to the third part of the epistle, which is spoken by the Spirit unto all the churches, and to every one who hath an ear

to hear; setting before us a glorious promise, which shall become the property of every one who overcometh. This is the truly catholic part of each epistle, written not according to the circumstances of any particular church, or to foreshow the condition of any period of the catholic Church, but in the language of all times and places and conditions, being the language of the Holy Ghost to every one who is born again of water and the Spirit, and to those who are not regenerate, setting out the sevenfold form of blessedness into which they may enter through the avenue of faith which is in Christ Jesus. Their being addressed to all the churches, shows them to be of no partial interpretation; their soliciting the ear of every creature under heaven, shows the Spirit to be the preacher of Christ unto all the world, while the investiture of the blessing in those only who overcome, declares that not every man whom God loves and invites, nor yet every one whom He admits into His Church, but those only who accept the invitation, and persevere in the fierce and fiery conflict, shall inherit the blessing. As it is written, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." From this threefold address of the seven promissory words of the Holy Ghost—to all men, to all the churches, and to all who overcome—we may well expect to find them containing at once the most free, full, and encouraging forms of divine truth; being, as it were, the body of future blessedness, the substance of all hope expressed in seven promises. We ought by these considerations to be moved to examine them carefully as the seven spiritual chambers in which the whole treasury of God is contained. That spoken to the Church of Pergamos is in these words:—

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it," (Rev. ii. 17.) Though, as hath been said above, these promises be of the largest and freest character, not restricted by time, place, or circumstances, but essentially spiritual, each hath nevertheless a relation to that form of Christ's office as the universal Shepherd, to that form of the Church's temptation, and of the Church's condition with which it is connected: so that there is a propriety in the promise, as connected with its own epistle. For though spiritual truths

consist not of parts, so as to be treated by the rules of number, they have various aspects in which they may be represented according to the various conditions of those whom you would work upon. And the Spirit of Christ being minded to present the one reward of eternal blessedness to those seven conditions of the Church to which Christ addresseth Himself under seven different styles, doth present it to each under that aspect, and in that form of words, which is best fitted to produce the desired effect of encouraging them to combat stoutly against the powerful and wily enemies of the Lord. Now, of the Church of Pergamos behold what were the peculiar conditions. First, they were tempted by these Balaamite and Nicolaitane teachers, who presented seductions to the sense, and misled the brethren to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to be guilty of spiritual, and perhaps also of carnal, fornication. Therefore the Spirit wordeth His exhortation so as to present the true object which the sense should desire, "I will give to eat of the hidden manna," which, as we shall show, contains the promise of our being made partakers of Christ's glorified flesh, and being joined to him in one body for ever. And because that Church had become confused with base and counterfeit intermixtures of these disciples of evil doctrines, whereby the glory of the true members of Christ was stolen away from Him; the wheat being hidden in the midst of the chaff, the Holy Spirit promiseth to give "a white stone," the custom among the ancients for acquitting a person put upon his trial, whereas those who were condemned had a black stone given to them: so that if an indiscriminate company were brought up to trial, in which some innocent ones are grieving over false and wrongous accusations, the giving of a white stone to such would prove the deliverance of their souls from the sorest trial to an innocent man, the disgrace of being confounded with the guilty. Moreover, because Christ presents Himself to this Church as He who hath the sharp sword with two edges, a severe and somewhat fearful aspect, the Spirit comforteth the faithful, that in that stone should be written a new name, which no one should be able to counterfeit; or, in other words, that Christ would deliver them from all such vile intermixtures and base companions, and set their souls free from the grievance of false brethren, by giving them their portion where no wicked one could enter, by putting upon them a character and clothing which no one could counterfeit. This is the end of His discipline; not to root out any, but to deliver His people from the neighbourhood and contamination of false and wicked professors, as it is written, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. . . . .

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. iii. 10, 12.)

THE HIDDEN MANNA.

The first part of this large and abundant promise of the Holy Ghost to the valiant and the victorious is in these words, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." Of which, to understand the consolation and the blessedness, it will be necessary first to enter into the consideration of the manna on which the Church lived in the wilderness; and, secondly, of that portion of it which was commanded to be taken and put in a golden pot, and laid up before the Lord, within the ark of the covenant, in the most holy place, (Exod. xvi. 33, 34; Heb. ix. 4.) For to this, I think, the word "hidden" directeth us, "the manna that was concealed or hidden." Now as to the first point, our Lord gives us the most ample satisfaction in the 6th chapter of the Gospel by John; from which by an easy inference, we shall attain to the knowledge of the second point. He there teacheth us that the manna on which the children of Israel fed, from the time of their entering into the wilderness until the time of their entering into Canaan, the land of promise, is the type of his flesh, the true bread of life, with which His people are fed during their pilgrimage, until they reach the land of their rest, (John vi. 30–36.) The bread which we partake of in the communion, is the symbol of that same flesh of Christ's body, without which we have no life in us, (John vi. 51–59.) And the mystery, both of the manna and of the Lord's Supper, is one and the same; namely, that the life which the believer receiveth in regeneration hath need of a continual aliment, is not self-subsistent, as it is not self-generated, but deriveth its sustenance from the body of Christ, whence also it had its origin. This we receive by the appropriating act of faith, which, as it makes another that is Christ to become ours, and brings two things that were separate to be one, is properly represented, and could only be represented by the act of eating; which is the only bodily act that hath this uniting, appropriating, and assimilating character. The manna that fell around the camp did therefore signify Christ sent down from heaven for us; becoming flesh made of a woman for us: and their being nourished by this without anything besides, doth signify that the whole Church of the firstborn hath nothing whatever to live upon, besides the body of Christ, which is all-sufficient to sustain them. Being taken out of symbolical and figurative language, and expressed in simple and spiritual language, the same great truth standeth thus: That when

the Father giveth faith to His chosen ones, and they are regenerated into a new life by the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, their faith continually supported by the Father, doth continually direct itself to the risen Christ, and receive from Him that work of the Spirit which is necessary to the sanctification of mortal flesh, and not only to its sanctification, but to empower it to do greater works than He did, even to show forth that fulness of power which He hath received from the Father. The thing communicated in the Lord's Supper, is called His body for this very reason, that the Holy Ghost doth put into the believer not this grace and that grace, but the whole power and presence of Christ's body risen and glorified at the right hand of God. Not flesh, as the Papists say; for we have that already, and had it before He took part of it with us; but power in flesh to do the will of God, and put forth the power of the risen Christ. We do not receive of the substance of His body risen, but power from it in the Spirit to manifest His redemption and sovereignty over all fallen creatures, and over our own flesh, the head of them all. This power we now have, but something more is promised to us if we overcome, even the participation not of the common, but of the hidden manna.

This expression, the hidden manna, refers, as I said, to that pot ful of the heavenly food which was laid up in the most secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High: "Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations," (Exod. xvi. 33.) And being there deposited in a pot of gold, it continued incorrupt; whereas that which fell around the camp corrupted in a day, save on the Sabbath, when it might be kept for two days. Now, if the manna on which the people fed, do signify, as our Lord teacheth, the substance of His flesh, given for the life of the world, then that manna incorruptible, which was laid up before the Lord, must surely signify the same substance, Christ's flesh, in that condition of immortality and incorruption wherein it now subsists at the right hand of God. And the promise in our text made to the valiant and victorious soldiers of Christ, that they shall eat the hidden manna, doth convey this glorious truth, that in the age to come, which is the time of our reward, we shall be fashioned after the likeness of His glorious body, and partake of that spiritual substance which from the tomb He made to come forth of corruptible flesh. The intention of God in secreting a portion of the manna within the veil, and conferring upon it the properties of incorruption, was to teach the Church, that of her heavenly food there are two forms, in one substance; the one the form of the corruptible, the other the form of the incorruptible; whereof the former is proper to nourish into holiness and strength this mortal

body, the latter to fill with honour and with glory that body immortal in which the saints of God shall arise. There is a measure of Christ's meat and drink which this mortal tabernacle can endure; there is a greater measure of the same which the immortal only can endure. And to this food of eternal and immortal strength, the hope of the Church of Pergamos is carried forward against that day when God shall reward the faithful followers of the Lamb. These Balaamite doctors taught them to partake of the idol feast which the heavenly teacher forbade: and now, says the Spirit, if ye will refrain, behold there is laid up for you before the Lord, the incorruptible food of an incorruptible life. "I will give you to eat of the hidden manna;" which being expressed in the language of the pure reason, apart from the symbols of sense, doth amount to this, that in the kingdom of heaven about to be revealed the faithful shall receive from Christ the full communion of His Spirit, which in its fulness they shall likewise be able to receive, whereas now they have but a first-fruits thereof. That measure of knowledge, and of prophecy, and of gift which we now enjoy, is in part only; that which we shall hereafter enjoy, is in perfection. Here we have so much of the Spirit as is necessary for the revelation of Christ, to the sight and capacity of a fallen world; there so much as is necessary for the government of a world redeemed: here we have so much of the Spirit of Christ as may enable us to share the sufferings of Christ, and like Him through suffering to be perfected; there, being perfected, we shall receive so much of the Spirit as may fit us for sharing the counsels and bearing the glory of our Husband and King.

While this promise carries in its bosom so much contentment and blessing, it doth, in the manner of its expression, bring another testimony to the wonderful wisdom in the structure of this book, and likewise to the truth of our method of unfolding the same. The "hidden manna," as hath been said, was laid up in the ark of the testimony within the veil, and therefore could not be obtained for nourishment until the secret things should be revealed. Now, this opening of the heavenly temple hath not place till the blast of the seventh trumpet; whereupon the time being come "to give reward unto his servants," it is said, (Rev. xi. 19,) "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." So also in Rev. xv. 5, at the time of the pouring out of the seven vials, it is said, "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:" but observe (ver. 8,) "no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled;" from which we certainly gather, that not until the pouring out of the last vials of wrath, and the blast

of the seventh trumpet, shall the victorious saints receive these promises of the Holy Ghost. Till then the Church is a wayfaring pilgrim, an unwearied soldier waging warfare for the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and when she hath overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, she hath yet another victory to achieve; which is, the victory over death and the grave. And she coucheth low to win that palm: into the tomb, into corruption, into dust, the Church willingly descendeth, tracking the footsteps of the destroyer through his wasteful region; and having gone into his inmost recesses of destruction, she comes forth thence an unsoiled, eternal, and glorious conqueror of death and the grave, singing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And now she hath the immortal food of an immortal life, the hidden manna, which is incorruptible: the body of Christ which is immortal, and by Him ever sustained, shall with Him ever possess and ever govern the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, and which is about to be revealed in the last time."

THE WHITE STONE.

"I will give him a white stone, and in it a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he which receiveth it." As the former part of the promise hath reference to the temptation of idol meats, with which the Church of Pergamos was tried, and carries with it the assurance of a trial which the world knoweth not of, so this latter part hath reference to the indiscriminate and confused communion and mixture of good and evil persons which the easy-minded angel of that Church permitted to subsist. In remedy of which Christ doth not advise the purer members to separate and secede from the Church, but holdeth out to them the promise of a time when the tares should be separated from the wheat, and the goats from the sheep, and the righteous should enjoy pure and holy communion with one another in the kingdom of his Father. For from the custom of the ancients to acquit by a white stone, I interpret the language of the text. When the judges gave their votes as to the innocence or guilt of any person, those who judged him innocent cast in a white stone; those who judged him guilty cast in a black one; and even unto this day the same custom is observed in admitting or rejecting candidates for the privilege of being enrolled members of honourable societies. So common was this amongst the ancients that the expression, "I gave my vote or voice," being rendered into Greek is, "I threw in my stone." And the word translated by us, *to vote*, is literally *to stone;* as, in our language, to

reject a candidate is denominated *black-balling*, from the custom of casting in white and black balls. Of this there occurs one instance in Scripture, "And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them;" literally, "I brought my stone," (Acts xxvi. 16.)

Now, the promise of a white stone I regard as equivalent to acquittal in the day of judgment. Christ speaketh in His character of Judge, having the law, whose symbol is a sharp two-edged sword, proceeding out of His mouth; and He saith unto the Church of Pergamos, "Fear not, though I thus appear to you; for in the day of judgment I will give to every one the white stone of acquittal. It is only the wicked who shall not stand in the judgment, nor come into the congregation of the righteous. With the pure I will show myself pure, and with the froward I will show myself froward." So far the interpretation is simple and direct. But now there occurs an expression harder to be understood, "And in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The connexion of this with the preceding part of the promise, and the necessity of it to the completeness thereof, and its appropriateness to the condition of the Church of Pergamos, I well discern. It adds to the acquittal of the Judge a sure token which no one can counterfeit, and promises to the saint separation from all hypocrites and dissemblers, from everything which defileth and maketh a lie. This, to a Church defiled and vexed with the intermixture of the wicked, as was the Church of Pergamos, is a great consolation; for nothing so grieveth a righteous and loving spirit as to be prevented by captious and opposing people from making mention of the goodness of the Lord. If you utter what you feel, it is either to stir up contradiction or wrath; and so, for the sake of quietness, and to prevent the stumbling of a brother, you are fain to hold your peace. This is so great a trial to a loving and thankful heart, that our Lord speaks of it several times as one of His sore trials, "But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs," (Ps. xxxviii. 13, 14.) How painful it is to be thus continually surrounded with the wicked, and hindered from that communion of the body of Christ which is its life and joy! Edification so blessed will it be to dwell together in that holy society of the New Jerusalem, into which "shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life!" (Rev. xxi. 27.) Into that city and tabernacle of God every one who receiveth this white stone shall surely enter; while those who receive it not shall dwell in the outer darkness. And to this an-

swer the two concluding verses of this revelation, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," (Rev. xxii. 14, 15.)

While thus we interpret the general scope and bearing of the last part of the promise, we feel that this is not enough, and must be confirmed and enlarged by a minute examination of the very words themselves. The *name* in Scripture signifies and declares the powers and properties of that to which it is appropriated. To be called by the name of the Lord, or to have the name of the Lord called upon us, is a dignity and honour ofttimes referred to in the Old Testament, and promised, in the next chapter of this book, to the Church of Philadelphia, after a manner or in a fulness yet unexampled in the history of the Church. "I will write upon him my new name." This I consider as equivalent to the promise that they should share the dignity and honour of Christ in the day of His appearing. There is likewise mention made in chap. vii. of a company who were sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads; which seems to carry a reference to the high priest, who wore upon his forehead a golden plate or coronet, whereon was inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord." But in the passage before us there is, I think, a shade of difference from both these, inasmuch as the new name is not written upon the person, but upon the white stone which is given to the person. This peculiarity some derive from the manner of the ancients in casting lots with stones on which were written the names of the persons among whom the lot lay. But to this I object, that the whole tenor of the passage hath no reference whatever to the casting of lots. Others incline to interpret it by the custom among the ancients of appointing persons to offices of trust by the same method of inscribing their names upon a stone or tile. To this also I object, that the name written is not the name of the person, but a new name, descriptive in some way or other of that dignity to which he was to be promoted. Upon the whole, instead of looking for the interpretation of this from ancient customs, I prefer seeking for it in the Scriptures themselves, where this form of speech not unfrequently occurs. For example: in this very book it is said of the New Jerusalem, that it hath "twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Now these twelve foundations were twelve stones, and were the same with the twelve stones in the breast-plate of judgment, upon which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. What now of mystic virtue was added to these stones by

being thus engraven with a name? In the former instance it is signified, that the twelve apostles are the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, the city of God: in the latter case, that the twelve patriarchs or tribes, or the complete house of Israel, are the Urim and Thummim, the lights and perfections, the breast-plate of judgment to our great High Priest, by whom He shall make His counsels known, and His judgment felt upon the earth in the world to come. Taking the light of these instances of the like kind, where a name is engraven on a stone, to which we might have added others, and particularly the foundation-stone of Zechariah, we come to interpret the expression before us. The white stone, we have said, is the stone of acquittal, the test of innocency.—This is its virtue. Now the new name written upon it must be that which gives and preserves to it such a virtue. Whose, then, is it to acquit and justify in such a manner as no one shall ever gainsay? It is Christ, the Judge, who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth; who justifieth and no man condemneth, who condemneth and no man justifieth. The name I should therefore judge to be the name of Christ's hidden ones; that name which no man can counterfeit, because no one knoweth it but He himself, and those to whom He giveth the knowledge of it. If I err not, we have the first fruits of it in that cleanness of the conscience which we receive from Christ by the Holy Ghost; that washing of regeneration, and purifying of the Holy Ghost, which is shed on us abundantly through our Lord Jesus Christ; that baptism which saveth us, not the washing away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God; that renewal in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. The faithful in Christ Jesus have now no conscience of sin, have now a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. This is bestowed on us, as Peter declares, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) in our baptism, when we receive our Christian name. But in this life it extendeth only to the spirit: and the time is yet to come, the blessing is yet future, when the flesh also shall receive this purification; and in that day a new name, answering to this new condition, shall be put upon us. We have now the name of Christ in the spirit; we are the mystical Christ: then we shall have the name of Christ also in the flesh; we shall be the manifest Christ, shining forth for ever with His glory, and for ever exercising His power, and making His goodness to be known and felt.

The point, however, of most importance in this part of the Spirit's promise is, that no one knoweth that name but those who receive it; by which I understand that it is a state of being whereof those only are conscious who are exalted thereto: just as in the 19th

chapter, where Christ re-appears on the stage of this world's affairs, it is said "that He had a name written, that no man knew but He himself," to signify His peerless dignity of place, and undivided excellency of being; so here, His faithful people are promised a dignity of place and being in the world to come which no one is conscious of save themselves. Christ being God, no less than Spirit-filled man, is above all creatures, and hath a name known to Himself alone: we, as sharing with Him spiritual union, are the heads of all creatures, and have a name which none of them can know. As no creature intermeddleth with His divine subsistence, so, I think, no creature intermeddleth with our subsistence as His children by regeneration, who, through great tribulation, have come unto the inheritance of His creature glory. The word of the text is positive, that no one knoweth that name but he that receiveth it; and the promise is made only to those who overcome in this day of fierce trial. These are New Testament promises to the Church under sore tribulations, set for the testimony of Jesus unto the death. The Old Testament promises are, if I err not, of another kind; holding forth natural perfection in flesh, immortal and eternal honour and glory on the earth; but to us, to whom the mystery hidden from ages is revealed, the mystery that we should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body with Christ,—the promises are all of a character peculiar and appropriate to the children of Christ, who are born unto Him by regeneration of the Holy Ghost. The Church, whose right these promises are, is completed, I believe, at the coming of the Lord; and, as Christ's bride, we have a nearness of place to Him and a coequality of creature-dignity which belongeth only to the New Jerusalem, and belongeth not to the kings of the earth, or to any creatures of God besides. We have given to us a white stone, and in it a new name written, which no one knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

LECTURE VII.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA.

REV. ii. 18–29.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation; except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you, according to your works. But unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already; hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:) even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

IF the first epistle might be entitled of Pastoral Love, and the second of Martyrdom, and the third of Discipline, this fourth epistle, addressed to the Church in Thyatira, might be entitled of *Works*. Twice over, in acknowledging the services of its angel, doth the chief Shepherd commend His works: "I know thy works . . . and thy works, and the last to be more than the first," (ver. 19.) And in the reproof which He administers to him for permitting that woman Jezebel to seduce certain of the Church, He calleth them His *servants*, and commandeth them to repent of *their works;* by which judgment He says that He will teach the churches this lesson, that He will render unto every one according to his *works*. And again, He exhorteth the faithful, by the consideration that He will not put

upon them any other load or burden, language proper to a workman, servant, or slave; and, finally, the promise is made, not in the common phrase, "he that overcometh," but with the addition, "and keepeth my *works* unto the end;" and the promise itself is the promise of work; the work of a conqueror, to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and to break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. This epistle is manifestly written in the language of a master to his workmen, and is, I think, intended to exhibit that side of truth which looks towards obedience and good works. If the epistle to the Church at Ephesus set forth the excellency of love, and that to Smyrna the excellency of faith, and that to Pergamos the excellency of holiness, this epistle to the working Church of Thyatira sets forth the excellency of good works.

Thyatira was a place of no great celebrity in the region of Asia Minor, called Lydia: more anciently its name was Pelopia and Euhippa, and now by the Turks, Akhizar or Akhissar. It was a colony of Macedonian Greeks, situated between Pergamos and Sardis, about forty-eight miles south-east of the former. At this day it consists of about one thousand houses, with two hundred or three hundred huts, and possesses only one Greek church, with nine Turkish mosques. The church, and indeed the whole place, is wretchedly poor; and the last visitants found the priest so ignorant of, and indifferent to, the truth, that he would not accept the gift of a New Testament, not thinking it worth the having. The ruins of its ancient churches are all under ground, as it were sunk into the earth; and the present church stands beneath the level of the churchyard around. Everything betokens poverty and wretchedness. Of this city was Lydia, a seller of purple, whom the apostle brought to the knowledge of the truth at Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia; for, as we have said, Thyatira was a Macedonian colony. It stood upon a branch of the river Caicus, upon an extensive plain, and seems, from the extent of its ruins, to have been a place formerly of much greater consideration and extent than it is at present. The Church here planted, once acknowledged the superiority of Sardis; but now its priest looks up to the bishop of Ephesus as his archpriest. Such was, and such is, the place in which was planted that Church to which this epistle is addressed, consisting, as usual, of three parts,—the style of the writer, the message to the angel, and the promise to the Church.

THE STYLE OF THE CHIEF SHEPHERD—SON OF GOD.

"These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." This consisteth of

two parts, first, the name "Son of God," which, for the first time, and indeed the only time in this book here occurreth; the second, the symbolical description, "who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." With respect to the name, I think there are good grounds for believing that here it is taken from the second Psalm, where it is given to Him with great solemnity as the decree of God: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," (Ps. ii. 7–9.) My reason for thinking that this part of Scripture is referred to by the Lord in the name under consideration is, that those very words of the Psalm are quoted in the body of the epistle, of which the title, Son of God, is the superscription: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:) even as I received of my Father," (Rev. ii. 26, 27.) Believing therefore that our Lord is here revealing Himself, and speaking to His Church in that dignity of Son of God to which by God's decree He was advanced, I would now, by His grace, endeavour to unfold the import of this name Son of God, by a diligent study of the Scriptures, especially of the second Psalm. The first tidings which came to this world, that a son of earth should be entitled the Son of God, was brought to King David, by Nathan the prophet, when he was meditating in his heart to build a house for the Most High: and it is recorded in these words: "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for thy name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son," (2 Sam. vii. 12–14.) Now, the Apostle Paul (Heb. i. 5) expressly applies these words, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son," to Christ. And indeed to no one else but an eternal King, of an eternal kingdom, could they be applied. Solomon, indeed, the son of David, did build a house, and sit upon the throne of David his father, and otherwise prefigure the true Son of David and Prince of Peace, who shall build the temple of the Lord; but to him it is impossible to apply any of the promises of this blessing in their full import; and least of all that which we are now considering, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son," a promise which was so sacredly devoted by the Jews to Messiah, that it was accounted the highest treason for any one to call himself Son of

God. And because Jesus witnessed this good confession before the high priest, He was arraigned of blasphemy, and cut off out of the land of the living. Now observe, that this promise of the Son of David's divine generation is given in the bosom of an oracle concerning kingly power upon the earth for ever; and wherever this glorious seed of hope appeareth in the Psalms, bearing the fruit of praise and thanksgiving, it is always in the like connexion with an eternal and universal kingdom. For example, in the eighty-ninth Psalm, which is no more than a divine commentary upon Nathan's words, the promise occurs in this connexion: "I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." And in the 132d Psalm, where the same oath of God to David is built upon, the connexion is not so much with the power as with the holiness of the promised Seed of Heaven. That Psalm hath to do not so much with the throne which He is to establish, as with the temple which He is to build for ever; not so much with the royalty, as with the Priesthood of our Melchizedec. Indeed, these two attributes of the great King are never separated from one another, for a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom. Behold the connexion in which the word of God by Nathan is introduced in the 132d Psalm, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore," (vers. 11, 12.) But perhaps of all others the 72d Psalm is that in which the glory of the estate of the King's Son is most fully enlarged upon, of which we cannot quote a part, but must refer to the whole portraiture therein contained of the glorious kingdom which the Son of God is yet to establish amongst men. The 110th Psalm springs, I think, from the same root of Nathan's oracle unto David; for there David addresseth his own Son as his Lord, and maketh mention of His Melchizedec priesthood, the priesthood of the oath or the decree, and represents Him as going forth to root out and to destroy all His enemies, all the enemies of righteousness, from the face of the earth. All these Psalms do most beautifully embody the office and function of Him who should arise and call God His Father, while they sweetly interweave the power and holiness of His reign; whereof the former in our text is, I think, represented under the name Son of God, and the latter under the symbolic imagery, "His eyes were like a flame of fire, and His feet unto fine brass." But, after all, it is in the second Psalm that the peculiar

glory of this name Son of God is revealed. This Psalm presents to us, in the first three verses, the description of a very turbulent, ungodly, and blaspheming condition of the earth, wherein the Gentiles and the peoples—that is, the heathen and the nations who know God—are meditating a vain thing. What this proud and vain imagination is we are not told, until the heads of this confederacy have likewise been mentioned, which are the kings of the earth and the rulers, between whom, judging by the apostle's commentary in the 4th chapter of Acts, we understand this difference to be intended, that the former signify the civil and the latter the ecclesiastical authorities, the heads of the nations and the rulers of the synagogues, who, combining under them both the heathen and the professedly Christian nations, do confederate together against the Lord and against His Christ, to compass the vain and blasphemous imagination of breaking their bands asunder, and casting their cords away from them. This is a state of the world, both of the heathen and of Christendom, unto which this Psalm, containing the proclamation of Him whom the nations despised and would cast out, is earnestly yet severely spoken. It is a Psalm for reclaiming them from their mad career and their horrible purpose, by proclaiming the decree of God that this Jesus, whom they crucified and would cast out, is the Son of God, and cannot by any combination of men be resisted or withstood. This state of things presupposes that Christ hath been preached as Lord over the nations, as the co-equal with God in the government of the earth. It implies that God hath made common cause with Christ in the work of governing mankind; for, otherwise, how should they confederate against both God and His Christ? for, otherwise, how could they aim to break THEIR bands and cast THEIR cords away from them? It is not the Jewish state of the world before Christ appeared, nor yet the state of the world during the ministry of Jesus, ere yet He had been declared the Son of God, the Christ, the Lord, by the resurrection from the dead; but it is the state of the world after His resurrection, and the promulgation thereof by the preaching of the gospel, that is especially and properly the subject-matter of this Psalm: wherefore also the apostles, when, after the day of Pentecost, they preached Jesus of Nazareth both Christ and Lord, and saw the kings of the earth and the rulers confederate against Him, were directed by the Holy Ghost to apply this Psalm to the state of things which then came into being, and which hath been ever since. Wherever the nations of the earth, under their kings and priests, have confederated to reject the authority of God and his Christ, preached unto them by the Church, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,—whether these priests be

Pagans, or Papists, or Protestants,—this state of things mentioned in the second Psalm hath been there exhibited. And, let me say it, except in a few places, and these but spots on the face of the earth; except in a few times, and these long and far between; this hath been the conduct of the nations and kings of the earth, of professing Christendom and its rulers. But while there hath been this constant and continuous fulfilment of the antichristian spirit, from the day of Pentecost until now, there is a crisis and a consummation which is near at hand, when that wicked one shall be revealed, whom Christ will consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. To this crisis and consummation the hope of the faithful in the Church of Thyatira, and all other churches, is directed in these words: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I have received of my Father, and I will give him the morning star." The mention here made of the morning star fixes the time of this great catastrophe of nations to be on the eve of the morning of the first resurrection, when, as the Star of Jacob, He shall come, who shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, and the day-star is ready to rise on our hearts. So near, also, is the consummation of confederacies against God and against His Christ. The first out-bursting of this God-denying and Christ-rejecting spirit, was exhibited at the French Revolution, to the terror of the whole world. Since that ebulition of hell was stopped by the mercy of God, and the instrumentality of this Protestant kingdom, in order to try the nations a little longer, and give them space for repentance, there has been a season of underground workings and collections of materials in all parts of the world, especially in Christendom, which only wait for the permission of God, for His withdrawal of His hand, to burst forth in direful desolation of everything established under the sanction of the Father and the Son. The loosed winds raging to rush forth and destroy the earth, and to attack the throne of God itself, are still held back, by the four mighty angels, until the servants of God shall have been sealed; and then shall they go forth to subvert the fear and worship of God, and to confederate the world in one great enterprise against the Lord and his Anointed, to break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from them. This is described as the last act of the antichristian spirit in the 17th chapter, where the beast with the kings of the earth having destroyed the corrupted and corrupting Church, combine to make war with the Lamb and with His faithful ones;

and the issue of this vain imagination is described in the 19th chapter, where the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire, and the kings of the earth are slain with the sword. That this, the last event of the time state of things, whereupon follows instantly the millennial age of the Church, is the event referred to in the second Psalm, is put beyond a doubt by the Holy Ghost himself, who hath expressly identified that action with this prophecy, in the very heart of the action itself, (ver. 15:) "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he may smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." These words, "he shall rule the nations with a rod of iron," are taken from this Psalm, and put it beyond a doubt, that the action of the Psalm is the last action of God and his Christ against apostate Christendom and the confederate heathen, wherein Christ acts in the character of the Son of God, which the preachers of the Gospel have been claiming for Him since His resurrection and ascension up on high.—Having thus ascertained beyond question the futurity of this confederation, as an historical event, notwithstanding its continual presence as a condition of things since the day of Pentecost, we now go on to unfold the power of the name, Son of God, in the Psalm, which, having opened the revelry of wickedness and blasphemy that filled the earth, doth thus proceed: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his hot displeasure." These words express the madness of the undertaking, its vanity greater than its villany; seeing it excites the contempt, ere it enkindles the wrath of God. But will men indeed be so mad as to lift their hand against the throne of the Eternal, where Christ is seated? or with what arms will they invade the realms of the invisible God and of His Christ? The question may well be asked; for the thought is perplexing in the extreme, and the answer is not at hand save to those who know the constitution of the Church, I mean the body of Christ upon the earth. But to one who understandeth and well believeth that there is a people, and ever hath been, and ever will be, upon whom God's name is named, in whom God dwelleth, and to whom Christ is united by ties indissoluble, one with them as He is one with the Father; He, I say, who thus comprehendeth the constitution of the Church on earth as God inhabited, as one with God through union in the Spirit with the risen Christ, finds himself at no loss to conceive the manner of this horrible action, in which the powers of darkness shall league themselves with the sons of men. It will consist in a systematic undertaking on the part of kings and priests to bring to an end the race of the godly, and utterly

suppress the witnesses of God in the flesh; which to undertake is to undertake the casting out of God and Christ from this world and its affairs. It is to attempt to nullify God's thousand promises, His everlasting covenant, His unchangeable word. But it will be undertaken, as sure as God hath written this Psalm to warn men from undertaking it; and how near it is God only knows. May I be disappointed when I give my conjecture that it will be within our generation, and that our eyes shall look upon it. I believe this fell work will proceed under the fair show of serving the well-being of the earth; and that it will find its chief promoters amongst the benevolent, the enlightened, and the moral, and, as they are called, the religious classes of mankind. Those holding the faith of the risen Christ, of His very flesh and His very lordship, and His very coming and kingdom; those who stand up to the very letter for the gifts and powers and privileges of the Church, will be looked upon as they now are, as mad enthusiasts, blasphemous, impious, and fanatical, whom to destroy is to do God service. This is not a speculation; even now it is a reality. No sobriety of mind, no force of argument, no accomplishment of learning nor mastery of eloquence, nor honesty of heart, nor piety of life, can even now screen such as hold these doctrines, and stand stiffly for them, from being derided, abused, libelled, and persecuted, by all those classes of the community who claim to themselves the honour of knowledge, morality, good sense, and religion. If only God proceeds with His work of enlightening the eyes, confirming the hearts, and strengthening the hands of those faithful ones, who know, and are standing for, His truth, it must needs come to pass that the hostility of the world, religious and irreligious, will increase more and more, to the truth, and to those who hold the truth, until at length nothing will satisfy them but excommunication from the Church, expatriation from their country, and extinction from the earth. Then shall be consummated that which is written in the second Psalm. Then shall God's wrath come up into His face: then shall He arise as a strong man out of His place: then shall He begin to shake terribly the earth. So very awful now shall His controversy with men become, so unprecedented in the annals of His long-suffering and merciful government, that this period is emphatically denominated in Scripture the day of His wrath; and as such in the Apocalypse it is described in the act of the seven vials; and in our Psalm it is thus described, as by words issuing forth from the offended majesty of God: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts

of the earth for thy possession." Part of this is spoken in the person of Jehovah, the omnipotent Father, who declareth that notwithstanding these confederacies of the children of men, He hath accomplished His purpose of establishing His Son, as the ruler of the earth, upon Mount Zion, the throne of His glory. In the former part of the Psalm, Messiah hath the name of Christ; but now He hath the name of King, God's King. This is the act spoken of in the Prophet Daniel, when the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven receives from the Ancient of Days an everlasting kingdom over all the nations which are under the face of the whole heaven. It is the same event to which our Lord refers, when He says, "Then shall ye see the Son of man coming in his kingdom, with power and great glory." "Upon Mount Zion, his rest is to be, within the sanctuary of his holy temple; for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Symbolically the same thing is set forth in the 14th chapter of the Apocalypse, where the Lamb is represented as standing on Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred-and-forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads; and it is the substance of all the prophets that "He shall reign in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously." Here it is that the throne shall be established, here it is that the thrones of the house of David shall abide for ever. "For the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This is the action of God, described in these words: "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool;" and there Christ sitteth, expecting that blessed consummation: which is the Father's way of demonstrating Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of God. The Son is known by inheriting His Father's name and the Father's possession. The former of these, Christ inherited in virtue of His generation of the Holy Ghost, but only in the Spirit; for in the flesh He was the Son of David, the seed of Abraham. At His resurrection, when the substance of His flesh was changed into the glorious brightness of the Father, He was declared to be the Son of God with power. And now, as God's Son and heir, He sitteth in the throne of God. But though thus, in virtue of His spiritual generation, and of His resurrection, as the first-begotten from the dead, He be determined and defined from amongst all creatures, as He of whom it was prophesied that He should call God Father, and God should call Him Son, still it remaineth to the complete demonstration of His Sonship, that He should be brought into His Father's inheritance: and this is accomplished when He is put in possession of Mount Zion, the temple, and the palace, and the citadel of the Most High; which

inheriting, He inheriteth the earth; which inheriting, He inheriteth creation. With all this He was invested by the Father, when He was seated in His own throne, in the heavens, and all power was given unto Him in heaven and in earth. Nay, more early still, with all this He was invested even in the days of His flesh, when He said, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father;" and again, "All things that the Father hath are mine." But though rightfully His, as their Creator, from the generation of His creature-being, they are not His in possession, until the time set forth in this Psalm, when as King He is "set upon the holy hill of Zion." Then hath He the name and the inheritance, and also the worship of the Son of God. For "when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." This act, therefore, of destroying the confederacy of the kings and nations against Christ, is likewise the act of dispossessing them, and putting Him in sole possession as man, of all which as God He created. And thus is Jesus of Nazareth declared to be not man only, but likewise the Son of God, and heir of all. Christ being thus instated in His Father's kingdom, doth thus utter His voice: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This declaration or promulgation of the decree takes place, as I understand, from the holy hill of Zion, after He hath been placed thereon as King over all the earth, answering to the proclamation which lately was made of our present gracious king throughout all his dominions. It is called the decree, to signify that He holds of God, that He reigns under God, is clothed with the authority of God, and that His sceptre hath in it the strength, duration, and unchangeableness of God, being the same with that in the 110th Psalm, of which the apostle makes such great account: "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec." Now though the promulgation of this decree upon the earth be not until the time He comes unto the earth, and receives the sceptre thereof and the inheritance thereof from His Father's hand, we are not therefore to suppose that the decree itself dates from that day; but, on the contrary, that it properly dates from the day of the resurrection, which the Apostle Paul teacheth in the 13th chapter of the Acts. Then when He was taken from amongst all creatures, and placed in the throne of the Father, God did make manifest to all the invisible creation, that this was His

Son. That day He was begotten out of perishable flesh into spiritual glory. Then became He first-begotten, in being the first-begotten from the dead; and forasmuch as no one hath yet entered into that glory, He is also the only-begotten. And thus the mystery of His eternal generation is manifested by His resurrection and installation in the throne of God. His generation, begun in the Virgin's womb, was perfected in the grave; just as ours, begun in our regeneration, is perfected in our resurrection. But none of us shall ever sit where He now sitteth in the Father's throne. This is His eternal supremacy amongst creatures, that He hath, since His resurrection, sat down in the majesty on high; where also He shall for ever sit in right of that co-essential and consubstantial Godhead which His manhood marreth not nor meddleth with at all. In the Father's throne, in the light of the Father's countenance, in the bosom of the Father's counsel, shall He be as God; while as man upon the throne of David He shall sit, and we along with Him, ruling the world in righteousness and the people with equity. I hold therefore, being taught by the Apostle Paul, (Acts xiii. 33,) that Christ received the decree on the day of His ascension into glory, and hath ever since had the homage of all the invisible creation, being worshipped as the Son of God. But He waiteth for the Father's time to be put in possession also of the visible creation. He is still in the condition of an expectant and of a suppliant; wherefore these words, "Ask of me," are introduced into the Psalm. This supplication Christ presenteth through His Church, both living and dead. For the martyrs beneath the altar continually cry aloud for this consummation of His power; and the Church on earth should ever say, Come, even so come, Lord Jesus. And when the happy time arriveth, all heaven pealeth with the acclamation, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and for ever." When the Church on earth ceaseth from asking of the Father this completeness of power and kingdom for His Son, she doth so far forth deny her Lord, and refuse her vocation. If the Church's prayers could be compressed into one word, that word should be, "Father, crown Him with the diadems of the earth." But though we may be silent, though we may by error and delusion dislike to hear of His coming, much more to pray for it; there is one who is not silent, but maketh intercession continually for His appearing, and that is the Spirit, who ever saith, Come. Nor can the bride be silent, though the harlot may; for she doth likewise ever say, Come. And so let us also say, Even so, come, Lord Jesus. At length the Father shall bring the Only-Begotten into the world, and give Him "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost

parts of the earth for His possession." When the law shall go forth from Mount Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, it shall go forth first in the way of judgment, and afterwards in the way of blessedness: judgment upon the ungodly, who shall dare to make war against the Lamb and His chosen ones, whom He shall "rule with a rod of iron, and break in pieces as a potter's vessel." "The Lord," that is Christ the Lord, "at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen; He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the head over many countries." And thus shall He approve Himself the Son of His righteous Father, by putting down the ungodly from the earth, and destroying all those who destroy the earth. And then He shall give the reward to every faithful servant of His Father. There shall not a promise of God fail to any person who relied thereon. Every jot and every tittle of His word will the Son make good; and thus is the Father glorified by the Son, His truth vindicated, His righteousness exalted on high, His goodness, His mercy, and His truth. And thus shall the Son of man be shown out to be the very Son of God; all God in Him, the fulness of Godhead embodied in, the weight of Godhead trust sustained by, Him. This day of judgment being accomplished, the Son, having cast out of the kingdoms all that offend and do iniquity, having cast them into the perdition of the second death, into the outwardness of the lake that burneth, shall for ever show forth the benignity and the goodness of God in the midst of His goodly creation. And by the sustentation of all power, and the communication of all blessedness, and the conservation of all being, which every one shall feel and acknowledge to be of Him and for Him, He shall be honoured of all as the Son of God, and for ever mediate between God and creation, laying His hand upon them both. Such is the outward history and eternal demonstration of that dignity which is contained in the name Son of God. Thus doth that Divine relationship between the Father and the Son, incomprehensible in the Godhead, become visible and comprehensible to the creatures. By looking at the progressive opening and eternal perfection of this work of the Father to make the Son known, and of this work of the Son to make the Father known, we obtain the only adequate—yea, I think, the only possible—idea of the relationship eternally subsisting between these two Persons of the blessed Trinity.

It appears, therefore, from an examination of those portions of Scripture, where the name Son of God is especially treated of, that it expresses dignity and dominion, and heirship over every creature that God hath made. In His generation by the Holy Ghost, we have the principle, and as it were ground of the name: "Therefore

shall He be called the Son of God." In His baptism, we have the proclamation of the name; "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" in the transfiguration, which is the resurrection anticipated and foreshown, we have the outward manifestation of the name: in the session at the right hand of God, we have the spiritual realisation of the name; and in the second coming and kingdom, we have its complete realisation over all things, visible and invisible. And in like manner we become sons of God by regeneration of the Holy Ghost, and are proclaimed such in our baptism; and in the first resurrection are openly avowed as such, receiving the adoption of sons. But there is this immense difference between us and Christ, that in His case these are but outward and visible demonstrations of a glory which He had with the Father before the world was; in our case, they are the origination of a new dignity and a new name, not inherited by right, but received by the adoption of the grace of God. In Christ the title of Son, or if not the title itself, that to which the title correspondeth, is a thing in the essence of the incomprehensible Godhead commonly called by divines the eternal generation of the Son. Of this relation the essence is, that between the Father and the Son there is such an union as that the Father is ever pouring forth upon the Son, and the Son ever desiring to have poured forth upon Him, the fulness of the Father's love; which office of intercommunion is sustained by the Holy Ghost, while again the Son ever returneth back unto the Father the offering of His joy and enjoyment in the plenitude of His counsel and His love. To make this outward, to show it to the world as the great source of creation, and the great end of it, and its only blessedness, this is the end of the incarnation of the Son; who continually receives upon Himself, through the Holy Ghost, the Father's counsel and love, and returns unto the Father, by the same Holy Ghost, His acquiescence and delight. And we who are taken into the same spiritual relation, through union with the Son, do manifest the same mystery of Godhead. Now, forasmuch as creation is one of God's works, it must be seen as the offspring of the Father's will communicated to the Son, and by the Son performed and established according to that will, for ever and ever. And here we see not only the reason why the title Son of God should always be connected with the headship of creation, but likewise why this title should be prefixed to an epistle concerning the works of the Church; for the Son of God is the workman of creation, to whom the Father communicates it as a purpose, which He completes as a work, and then presents it completed unto the Father. The first part of His work was, to bring all things out of nothing, according

to the Father's mind; the second was, to redeem all things from the power of sin and dissolution, and fix them for ever in the estate of infallible blessedness. And because certain of the creatures, into whose hands power and trust had been committed by the Son, had risen in rebellion against the Father, it becomes the labour of the Son to put them down, and wrest out of their hands those weapons of knowledge and power which they had turned against Him who made them. His work is, to break them with a rod of iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. These are His labours, to drive the wicked forth from the creation of God, into the lake that burneth, because as creation now standeth it doth not exhibit the perfect and complete purpose of the Father. The Son hath not yet finished the edifice of which He received the plan from the Father. The time is not yet come to deliver it up unto the Father. It doth not yet throughout all its chambers speak the praise of the invisible God; and this is the reason why the title Son of God is, I think, prefixed to this epistle of works, both to declare that all power is in Him, and that all work for God is done by Him; and therefore it is also that the epistle concludes with promise of power over the nations to those who overcome, and with privilege to rule them with a rod of iron, and to break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

2. Now with respect to the symbolical features given to Him in these words, "Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire and His feet of fine brass," I have little to add to what was set forth in our third lecture. His eyes are likened to flames of fire, because He is sent upon the errand of burning up wickedness round about; and His feet are likened unto fine brass, because He is coming to tread down wickedness like the mire of the streets. The only other two instances in Scripture of the like symbols are in the 19th chapter of this book, where He comes to destroy the wicked powers of the world, and to cast Antichrist and the apostate Church into the lake of fire; and in the 10th chapter of Daniel, where He comes in the same guise to make revelation of the same grand catastrophe of the time of the end. When God added the law to the promise, and gave Moses the vocation of lawgiver, He appeared in a flame of fire at the bush, and on the top of Sinai He showed Himself in consuming fire; and with fire He consumed those that offered strange incense, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up into her fiery pit Korah and his rebellious company. Fire, as we have observed, under the law, was the great element for purification: water was but the substitute to be used upon things which would not stand the fire. Into fire shall the material world be cast, and

out of fire shall come like silver out of the furnace seven times refined. These eyes of fire therefore are the symbols of devouring wrath against the wicked; as it is written, (Jer. iv. 4,) "lest my fury come forth like fire and burn that none can quench it. And again, (Lam. ii. 3,) "He burned against Jacob like a flaming fire which devoureth round about: He hath bent his bow like an enemy . . . He poured out his fury like fire." This symbol therefore gives a definiteness to the particular action which, as Son of God, the Father's potentate, the Father's servant, He is coming to perform. It is the work of searching out wickedness to destroy it. It is the work of inspecting the sacrifice and purifying it with fire. It was the office of the priest to look into the inwards of the victims, to look upon the plague spot of leprosy, and to see that there was no uncleanness in the camp of Israel. So cometh our High Priest here to look into the doings of the Church of Thyatira, to search their inward parts; and in order to show that all things are naked and open unto Him, He takes eyes of fire, which penetrates and pervades all matter, and which consumes all wood and hay and stubble, and all dross, and everything but the most precious and pure, to signify that His glances are like the lightning, which in an instant bursts forth from the dark cloud and enlightens the world, and in the next instant smites the earth and rends its adamantine rocks. So at the brightness that shall be before Him His thick clouds shall pass, hail-stones and coals of fire. He shall send out His arrows and scatter them; He shall shoot out His lightnings and discomfit them. If He but look at the earth it trembles; if He but touch the hills they smoke; when He shall lift up the veil of dark clouds that encompass Him, His enemies shall reel, and stagger, and fall, and cry unto the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" It shall be like that glance of the eye, that look of terror which He sent forth upon the Egyptians, when they pursued Israel by the Red Sea: as it is written, (Exod. xiv. 24,) "And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians." Such a look is there in the merciful eye of Jesus, to scatter hateful terror over marshalled hosts in the pride of their triumphant career. He hateth them not now: gentle and meek, patient and long-suffering, are His ways and His dealings with the sons of men. But the time cometh when He shall put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and repay fury to His enemies. How terrible shall His coming be! what a moment of trouble and dismay! what a world of desolation and death! O ye

sons of men, how long will ye love folly, turn at length and fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come.

These eyes of fire are coupled with feet of fine brass; that is, brass untarnished, and which will not take on the soil of that which it treadeth down. This carrieth an allusion to His act of treading the winepress of the wrath of God, which is His act of judging the Church for her apostasy; as it is written, (Matt. v. 13,) "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men:" and, (John xv. 6,) "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." These threatenings of the Saviour have their accomplishment continually in His Church, where all unprofitable members, who have in them no savour of life or godliness, are continually enduring this casting forth from the presence of the Lord. It goes on silently and unseen, but not the less surely. I believe there is not a Church, or hardly any Church, in which there are not branches lopped off for their fruitlessness, and left without to perish and decay; but, like every other spiritual truth, it shall have an historical fulfilment in that day when the vine of the earth shall be ripe for judgment, (Rev. xiv. 18.) Then when Christendom shall have cast off, or be in the act of casting off, the bands and cords of God and His Christ, and Church and State shall be setting themselves up in the name and place of the Lord and His Anointed, it shall come to pass that the Son of God shall come forth, as a Refiner among the sons of Levi, as a refiner's furnace and fuller's soap, to purify those that will stand the fire, and to give them raiment white as the light; and those that cannot, to consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. He shall come with His fan in His hand, and thoroughly purge His floor; the wheat to gather into His garner, the chaff to consume with fire unquenchable. He shall come with His axe in His hand to cut down every tree that beareth not fruit, and cast it into the fire. He shall come to tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, and all they who have trodden under foot the Son of God, shall be trodden under His feet, as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under foot. To this act of the Lord's judgment, so oft and so variously set forth in Scripture by the figure of treading down, have these feet of brass a manifest allusion. Brass is chosen, as at once the symbol of purity and durability. It was a sacred metal, used in the temple for all large and massive utensils. Before the invention of iron it was used

for all weapons of war: it was put upon the feet of the oxen which were employed to tread out the corn, to separate the wheat from the chaff and the straw, whereto allusion is made by the Prophet Micah, (iv. 13,) in a passage which is exactly parallel with this before us. In the passage before us, Christ hath feet of brass, as being about to promise unto His people power over the nations to tread them down, and break them in pieces; so, in the corresponding passage of Micah, it is promised unto the Jews in these words, which are in the letter what this epistle to Thyatira is in the spirit. "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel; for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." Strength of materials to do the work of treading down seems to be the thing conveyed by the symbol "feet of brass." Job, in his sore agony, questioneth thus, "Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh the flesh of brass?" Here, in the passage before us, the flesh of Christ's feet is the flesh of brass; and so shall the flesh of His Church be, in that the day of her triumphant labours. Again; Job, describing leviathan, that king over all the children of pride, says, "his bones are as strong pieces of brass, . . . he esteemeth iron as straw, and iron as rotten wood." And shall not Christ and His Church, whose work it is punish that leviathan, and to slay him, and to tread him down, have feet as strong and hardy as the brass?

Thus then, to conclude this first part of our epistle, the style adopted by the universal Bishop to the Church of Thyatira, we observe upon the whole, that it seems intended to convey the idea of supreme power, putting itself forth in the work of judging and executing judgment, to the intent of inviting and exhorting His people to the same holy severity and powerful destruction of iniquity within them, and before them, and around them; to the intent also of dismay to the workers of iniquity upon the earth, and especially the promoters of iniquity in His Church. In the Church of Thyatira, things had come to a worse pass than they were in the Church of Pergamos; for here the woman Jezebel, a name dreadful to God's Church, had obtained authority, and carried on her seductions of a long time. She had received both warning to repent and space for repentance, but had not repented; whereas the seducers in Pergamos were only in the stage of being called upon to repent. To this prior stage of apostasy, the sword of discipline, the pruning hook, is appropriate;

to that latter stage the eyes of flaming fire to consume, the feet of irresistible brass to tread down. For the reason therefore of indicating by His appearance what was in His mind towards that Church far gone into apostasy, the great Shepherd clothes Himself in this terrific array, and announceth Himself with this omnipotent name. And because in every Church there may be, and commonly are, individuals come to this same pass of backsliding from the way of righteousness, it is most necessary that the Head of the Church be ofttimes, yea continually, presented to them in this attire. Nay, more, because I believe that the flesh is the parent of all seduction and apostasy; which flesh we carry about with us, ready to revive in proportion as our faith decays; I hold it to be most necessary for every Christian to have these flesh-consuming attributes of Christ, the eyes of fire, and the feet of brass, ever present to his mind, as an essential, constituent part of his idea of the great Shepherd and Bishop of his soul. And finally, because our great Ensample and Forerunner, when minded to come forth as the great servant and workman of the Father, in the putting down of iniquity, doth present himself in the high character of God's Son, with eyes flaming forth against evildoers, and feet omnipotent to tread them down to hell, we who all the day are called to labour in the same vocation, we who are called for no other end but to serve God, in making sin to cease and righteousness to prevail, ought ever to bear in mind and announce ourselves by our high and heavenly name of "sons of God," and in that character go forth to search out iniquity both in ourselves and others, with a strong hand to war against it, and with a heavy foot to oppress it to the earth.

PART II.—THE MESSAGE TO THE ANGEL.

In our last lecture we opened an opinion more recently, and indeed during the progress of writing out these lectures, come to, That the seven epistles, besides containing a universal and catholic code of instruction and promise from the chief Shepherd to every congregation, and to every member of His Church, in all times, and places, and conditions, until He come again, do also contain a prophetic anticipation of the seven successive states into which His Church should be brought for the purpose of contending against the sevenfold forms of temptation with which she should be assailed of the devil. The first or Ephesian state is that of pastoral love and watchfulness, triumphing over decline of zeal, decay of love, and the natural temptation to cool in every spiritual work through the manifold allurements of the devil, the world, and the flesh. This had its period from the constitution of the Church by the Holy Ghost at

the day of Pentecost, until the time when a second trial arose to rouse the Church from her lethargy. This was the temptation of outward violence and persecution to the death, conquered and prevailed over by faith in Christ the resurrection and the life, and by the hope of deliverance from the second death. When this had exhausted itself by two centuries of persecution, there arose a third form of temptation from compromising teachers who sought to accommodate the separateness of the Christian Church to the laxity and latitude of Pagan worship; of which evil the miserable fruits to this day subsist in those relics of Pagan and Jewish worship which form the mainstay and chief characteristic of Papal superstition. It is the season during which the prophets, or ministers of the word, intrigue with the kings of the earth, in order to bring the Church into base thraldom to their evil influence, through forgetfulness of her heavenly King. Next comes the season in which she sits as their base concubine, the pandress to their ambition and tyranny, their adultress spouse; having forsaken Christ to whom she was betrothed, from whom she had received the pledge of the Holy Ghost, in earnest of that kingdom in which she is to be glorified, his queen for ever against the day of His appearing. The chaste and beautiful spouse of Christ bringing forth the first-fruits of their mutual love, is exhibited to us in the 12th chapter of this book; at the conclusion of which she takes her flight into the wilderness, to escape the persecution of the beast; where she abides during forty-and-two months, nourished of God. During this time her seduction has been accomplished; for at the end of that period she comes forth in the 17th chapter riding upon the beast which had fed upon the blood of her children. And she herself also is drunk with the blood of saints; with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

This transfiguration of the Church from the beautiful woman of chapter xii., into the mother of harlots of chapter xvii., which takes place during the 1260 days' abode in the wilderness, is, according to my notion of the historical succession of the seven churches, the same as the transition from the state of the Church of Smyrna to the state of the Church of Thyatira. The intervening Church of Pergamos presents the wretched accommodations and evil intermixtures through which this sad transaction was accomplished. The one is, the prophet, or minister of the word, pandering to the State, Balaam to Balak, in order to bring the Church into fornication and harlotry; the other is, the Church thus brought into the state of a harlot, and exercising her evil practices, like Jezebel, to destroy all the true prophets of God, and to promote the prophets of Baal. And both together teach this sad but true lesson, that if the ministers of the

word, through facility and courtesy, will indulge themselves, and make their suit to the powers that be, it will at length be returned upon their own head; for in process of time the Church, taking into her bosom worthless and worldly persons, will come to be intolerant of any prophet who, like Elijah, dares to speak the truth, and will enact the part of Jezebel against him. Pergamos is the state of the Church seduced by her ministers into the embrace of the world; Thyatira is the state of the Church devoted to the kings of the earth, and using their power to slay and to extirpate all faithful ministers, who would remind her of her affiance unto Christ, and them of their subjection to him. They mutually confederate against the Lord and His Anointed, to break asunder their bands, and cast away their cords from them.

While, therefore, the 13th chapter presents, as we showed in our last lecture, the parallel of the Church of Pergamos, the 17th presents the parallel of the Church of Thyatira: here they are represented in spiritual forms, there in ecclesiastical and political forms: here it is their relation to Christ the invisible Head of the Church, which is in question; there it is the relation of Church and State to one another and to Christ the Head of kingdoms, which is in question. But still though in their structure diverse from one another, there are such points of resemblance and hints of parallelism as cannot escape an observant mind, and struck my own long before I had adopted the idea of an historical succession as well as a catholic instruction to be present in the vision of the seven churches. We have already shown the points of correspondency between the Church of Pergamos and the vision of the 13th chapter, and we shall now do the same in respect to the Church of Thyatira and the vision of the 17th chapter.

The woman Jezebel, whose action in the bosom of the Church of Thyatira forms the chief part of the epistle, carries, as we have already treated, an allusion to that daughter of the Sidonian king who was married to Ahab, king of Israel, and brought with her the idolatries of her father's house, and particularly the worship of Astarte or Astaroth, or the moon; whose licentiousness was so great as to have induced the fathers of the Church, when treating of it, to be silent rather than to speak fully out. Solomon, seduced by his Sidonian queen, was the first to introduce it amongst the people of the Lord; but Jezebel established it, as well as the worship of Baal, and conceived the evil and vain thought of utterly rooting out the worship of the true God from among the ten tribes of Israel. And to such an extent did she succeed, as that Elijah thought that he was the only one left witness-

ing for God in the whole land. Nevertheless, God had seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. During those days it was that Elijah stood up, and prophesied that there should be neither dew nor rain in all the land for three years and a half; which being accomplished, and being about to prophesy of floods of water unto the thirsty land, he must first make a sacrifice, and offer up a hecatomb of the priests of Baal unto Jehovah. This was done at the foot of Carmel in the sight of all Israel: whereupon the prophet, after seven sendings of Gehazi, his servant, received from God, first a cloud as a man's hand, then a very deluge of rain upon the thirsty ground. To this event, or rather series of events, there be many allusions in the Apocalypse. The three years and a half is the time of the prophecy of the two witnesses, who have power (xi. 6) to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy. Likewise of the mother of harlots, it is said that she was drunk with the blood of the saints. And of Jezebel it is written, (1 Kings xviii. 4,) that she slew the prophets of the Lord. But perhaps the most striking point of identification between the mother of harlots and Jezebel, is the notice of her end, (Rev. xvii. 16:) "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." The remarkable circumstance of "eating her flesh" is derived from the history of Jezebel, of whom it was prophesied by Elijah, "dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel," (1 Kings xxi. 23.) Even as it was fulfilled by the hand of Jehu, (2 Kings ix.) And, in general, of Ahab's terrible idolatry, to which he was tempted of Jezebel, it is written, that "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Take all these things together, and I think there can be no doubt that in the three years and a half of Elijah's prophecy against the wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel, and in the manner and plan of them, and there is a typical foreshowing of the great apostasy into which the ten kingdoms of the Western Roman Empire should fall under the beast and the false prophet. Indeed, it is to my own mind beyond a doubt that the latter is represented under the figure of the mother of harlots, for this reason, among others, of pointing our attention to the great historical type of Ahab and Jezebel, and Elijah the prophet.

Having said this in general upon the temptation to which the Church of Thyatira was exposed, and of the condition in which it was found, we now proceed to interpret the message delivered to the angel, as it lies in the order of the text.

THE COMMENDATION.

Ver. 19: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."—Here is a large and plentiful commendation; of which one of the most remarkable circumstances is, that the works are mentioned twice over, and that with a particular note drawing our attention to it, "and the last (works) more than the first." By which I understand that, having been called in the providence of God for a fresh putting forth of zeal and energy, this faithful servant had not been slack to put to his hand, but had shown himself abundant in labours, and yet notwithstanding this readiness to good works, he had permitted his Church to fall into sad disorder, through want of discipline; teaching us, that a laborious life is not the whole of a minister's function. And besides works, and over again works, he hath charity and service, or deaconship, or ministry for the good of the whole, and faith also, and likewise patience; and yet, with all these ornaments and gifts, because he wanted holiness to separate between the evil and the good, and dignity to prevent his office from being trampled under foot, his Church hath come into a condition almost ripe for destruction. He had suffered a woman to divide his authority with him, and by her immodest carriage, and unholy doctrines, to bring many into sore calamities, into the very region of the shadow of death. Concerning the works and patience of a minister, we have already discoursed in the Epistle to the Church of Ephesus, and shall not add anything more than is necessary for the complete representation of the angel of Thyatira. The apostle, in writing to Timothy, entreateth him to prove himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. A working minister is one who is ever in his work; who is always turning himself to one duty or another, and never idle; full of business, never out of occupation. It is the quality very much cried up in these times, when every man is loud in his call for a working clergy. I suppose the angel of Thyatira to have been a man guided with a strong sense of duty to all professional tasks, and, so that he saw others busy, not very nice what they were busied about. Otherwise he would have taken a nearer observation and a narrower survey of that woman who vexed his Church. But perceiving her also to be full of business, he was content to let her go on, without any strict scrutiny as to what she was about. How like this is to the condition of many who are called the evangelical clergy of those days, who being come to a parish straightway are all in bustle to set on foot this work and that work,

this society and that society, to appoint committees, and secretaries, and treasurers, and Sabbath schools, and clothing societies, and other works and labours of love; without any very nice inquiry into the faith or opinions, or even characters, of those whom they engage in the work of well-doing. And the whole parish is like a religious workshop. To speak of opening afresh some of the wells of doctrine, or actually to do it, is idle and unprofitable speculation; to speak of reconstituting discipline is worse than troublesome. If it can be done by a society, it is all well: anything which can take the form of an outward work is excellent; what cannot, is at best suspicious. These are the works which I suppose the Lord to commend in the angel of the Church of Thyatira; such as are now the boast of the religious world, commendable in their place and good in their way, yet capable of co-existing in great and growing plenty along with a state of the Church so corrupt as to be ripe for destruction.

After his works he is commended for his charity, or love, the greatest of the Christian graces; as it is written, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity; these three; but the greatest of them is charity;" and without which no gift is of any account in the sight of God; wherefore it is called a more excellent way than the gifts of the Holy Ghost; "Covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way," (1 Cor. xiii.) Charity, in its largest sense of love, is there signified in contradistinction from those "gifts of the Holy Ghost, and powers of the world to come," which might be possessed without departure from iniquity; for many whom Christ never knew shall declare in the day of judgment that they prophesied in His name, and in His name cast out devils, and in His name did many wonderful works.

These various gifts of "the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, diversities of tongues, and interpretation of tongues," come upon the members of the Church to give them their several places of membership in the body of Christ: but charity, or love, is union with Christ, union with all the members, and union with God himself; as it is written, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." In this largest sense, love is called the fulfilling of the law, without which no work is good, with which every work is good: it is made the root of all graces of the Christian life in that account which Paul gives of it in the 13th chapter of 1 Cor.: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the

truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth," (1 Cor. xiii. 4–8.) In this delineation of charity, the form and fashion of the mind and Spirit of Christ, as it beareth upon others, is set forth by these characteristics: First, *Long-suffering*, the opposite of hastiness and headiness, a disposition of mind the most needful in a judge or ruler, in a teacher or pastor, and in every Christian who is set for the witness of truth against abounding error, and through much tribulation must enter the kingdom. Secondly, *Kindness*, accompanying the long-suffering, and employing itself all the while to prevent the evil from arising to a greater head, and to undo what is past by converting the evil-doer from the error of his ways. And these two qualities of love not only heal breaches, but prevent discords and confer enjoyment, and are the atmosphere which a loving heart exhales on all around. Thirdly, It *envieth* not, or, more accurately, is no zealot, but preserveth the golden mean; is temperate in all things, and makes its moderation to be apparent in the sight of all men. This is parallel with a feature of the wisdom from above, (James iii. 17,) "Without hypocrisy and without partiality;" for zealotry always arises from some mental reservation or partial dealing with the cause of truth; exaggeration of one part to the neglect of another: which even-handed and honest-hearted charity preventeth. Fourthly, It *vaunteth not itself*, or *is not rash*. The root of zealotry is mingling ourselves or our party up with the cause of truth; and the consequence of it is boastfulness and lordliness and insolence and hard-heartedness towards others, which again engenders tumults, both in the mind itself and in the Church without. Unbridled zeal is partisanship in the mind, and produceth partisanship in the conduct, which leads on to tumultuousness. Against this it is the good property of charity to defend us: for charity, or love, is full of condescensions, and never thinketh of itself more highly than it ought to think, but thinketh soberly. And thus also doth it prevent a man from being *puffed up*, which is the fifth quality of this excellent grace. The sixth, "doth not behave itself unseemly," refers to a modest carriage, chaste manners, and purity both of mind and of word; true love being of all things most opposed to sensual lust, which is continually covering itself with the pure raiment and calling itself by the holy name of love. But of all the excellent attributes of love, the next is, perhaps, the most radical and comprehensive: "it seeketh not her own," but hath the good of others in her eye; and attains her own ends by the means of well-doing, being content to become the office-bearer of the commonweal. Then she is not sharp to see faults, or, upon the sight of them, prone to fall into a paroxysm of wrath, but beareth

all things or covereth and hideth all things, as God covereth our sins by His grace, nor imputeth the transgression: which is also one of the features of love, that she thinketh no evil; or rather, imputeth not the evil, though well she observes it: for nothing is so holy as love, in which he that dwelleth dwelleth in the most holy God. And yet, though thus she is ready to forgive all evil, it is not that she hath any joy or enjoyment in evil; for all her joy is in the truth, and in that only; but that being filled with grace, she is open to forgive, not seven times only, but seventy times seven. Then, as to faith and hope and endurance, love is the only soil in which they are capable of coming to full maturity and complete perfection; wherefore it is said, "Love believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things." And finally that it is not of the nature of knowledge and prophecy, and the like gifts, which have their form and condition according to the present circumstances of the Church, and will assume new forms in the world to come; but is of an unchanging and perpetual character, never failing, but constituting, both in God and godly men, the essence of their being, and not a mere attribute of it. Love puts itself forth in these many forms, in the midst of this present evil world; but in the holy and heavenly world to come, these forms of long-suffering and forgiveness shall not be called into action, and so have they all a certain transitoriness compared with love.

I have chosen to take this grand description and noble panegyric of love from the Apostle Paul, rather than to attempt any of my own; and when I look at it in its largeness, I cannot sufficiently admire the perfection and beauty of it, nor enough covet it as the most necessary endowment of a Christian minister, who is exposed at all hands to temptation, both from within the Church, and from without. It is the subjugation of the turbulent passions of the flesh; it is the submission of the proud imaginations of the mind; it is the repression of all the divisive and selfish humours of the natural man, and the practice of that meekness and gentleness, poverty of spirit and peace-making, which are the standing features of the true Christian character. It is no mean commendation, therefore, of the angel of the Church of Thyatira, that the chief Shepherd, when looking with His eyes of fire, should say, "I know thy love." Would that there were some drops of it scattered from above over this arid soil of the courts in which the clergy of our churches assemble. Oh that each brought with him this gentle and forbearing spirit! How soon would their rage and schism vanish, their errors and heresies come to an end! Lying open to light and truth, they would soon grow into the knowledge of the secret of the Lord; the withered stump would by

the scent of waters revive, and put forth boughs like a plant. Ah me! what a fearful thing it is to reflect upon the absence of love in the assemblies of the elders, where it should have its chosen habitation! What can the Christian people think, when they see the Christian ministers stirred up with such paroxysms, and discharging against each other such envenomed words, like sharp arrows and two-edged swords?

The next ground of commendation is His *service*: "I know thy service." When the word occurs in Scripture in this absolute form, it almost always signifies what we understand by the word ministry; for example, "Make full proof of thy ministry," (2 Tim. iv. 5:) "He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry," (1 Tim. i. 12:) "For the work of the ministry," (Eph. iv. 12.) Now if we would find out what particular part of the pastor's or bishop's or angel's function was signified by the word *ministry*, we must betake ourselves to the examination of one or two passages of Scripture. That it is a spiritual function, connected with the preaching of the word, is evident from that saying of Paul's,—"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," (Acts xx. 24,) where the ministry and testifying the gospel of the grace of God are one and the same thing. In Acts vi. 4, it is called "the ministry of the word;" in 2 Cor. iii. 8, "the ministry of the Spirit;" and in the next verse, "the ministry of righteousness;" and in chap. v. 18, "the ministry of reconciliation." In all these cases, and others of the like kind, it seems to me that the word or truth of the gospel is the thing ministered, and that the ministry of it is the serving of it out to others, as the stewards of the household serve out the bread to the family. In the Church of Scotland, as it is constituted in its Books of Discipline, there ought to be a minister and a doctor or teacher; the former for applying and dealing out the truth to the people in its profitable and practical forms, the latter for teaching its elements, whose office is to open up the mind of the Spirit of God in the Scriptures simply, without such applications as the ministers use. The doctor's is the word of knowledge; the pastor's is the word of wisdom. In the Primitive Church there were a greater variety of ministries, diversities of ministries, (1 Cor. xii. 5,) corresponding to the diversities of gifts, (ver. 4,) which, taken together, constituted the "manifestation of the Spirit," (ver. 7,) and were the proof of an inworking God, (ver. 6.) Of these ministries and gifts, there are only two which concern the word; namely, "To one is given by the Spirit *the word* of wisdom, to another *the word* of knowledge by the same Spirit," (ver. 8.) But when the

apostle, in the same chapter, comes to enumerate the diversities of appointments which the Spirit gave in the Church, by giving divers gifts, to be ministered by divers persons for the common weal, he enumerates them thus: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," (1 Cor. xii. 28.) And in the corresponding passage in the 12th chapter of the Romans, we find the diversities of gifts in the one body of Christ thus expressed: "Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness," (ver. 6–8.) Here the ministry is separated from prophecy on the one hand, and teaching on the other, from exhortation also, and from rule or government. And so also in the Epistle to the Ephesians, (iv. 11,) we have the gift of the Holy Ghost, sent down from Christ after He ascended up on high, constituting some apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, others pastors, and others teachers; whom He distributed, saith He, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." I confess myself totally unable to discover any reason for which certain of these gifts and ministries are now spoken of as extraordinary, intended only for an emergence, and for ever ceased. I do not believe this, and long ago I publicly expressed my conviction that it was erroneous: if they be restored, I will greatly rejoice; that they are not with us, I greatly grieve and lament. Well am I assured, that they are every baptized person's privilege, as much as the forgiveness of sins. For when Peter first preached Christian baptism, it was "for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And what he means by the gift of the Holy Ghost he distinctly declares to be that promise of Joel, which Christ had received, (Acts ii. 33,) and which they now saw and heard in them, (ver. 16;) adding these words: "For, the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call." This is the promise of Joel, in his very words. "You and your children," is the substance of Joel ii. 28: "as many as the Lord our God shall call," is the substance of verse 32; which in the Septuagint, commonly quoted by our Lord, is "the evangelised whom the Lord shall call." The word "afar off," added by the apostle, if we may judge by the corresponding language

of Paul, (Eph. ii. 17,) denotes the Gentiles, upon whom, in the case of Cornelius and his company, without the intervention of any person, the gifts were poured out, with what freedom they were upon the disciples at Pentecost. Now, if the promise of the Holy Ghost, as foreshown by Joel, and shown on Pentecost, were not as much connected with baptism as the remission of sins itself, why would the apostle have held it out to all to whom he preached? why would the Lord have given it to Cornelius, in connexion with baptism? And if so be the baptized are as responsible for their possession and use, as for the possession and use of the remission of sins, what have we to answer unto God for the want of them? I fear it will be but a sorry apology to say, They taught us in the schools of the Church, that these Pentecostal gifts were only for a season, and that it were blasphemy in us to expect them. Who taught you? Doctors, very learned doctors. And what are they? God, or man? They are but men. Then are you taught not by the word of God, but by the precepts of men. You make void my word by your traditions. And this indignity do you offer as your apology? But to return—

The gift which the angel of the Church possessed, he had faithfully ministered. The Lord knew his ministry, and had no fault to find with him on this head. He had not neglected the gift which was in him; but according as he had received it, he had ministered it as a good steward of the manifold grace of God. These various gifts were given to every one for the common behoof, and not for partial enjoyment, or personal distinction, or vain glory. The Corinthian Church, instead of thus using them as a trust of God for the well-being of the whole body, had turned them to the service of their own selfish vanity, and used them in the Church as the subject of boasting, the one over the other. Not so the minister of the Church of Thyatira, who had well occupied his talent, and made merchandise of souls with it; using it for the perfecting of the saints, and the edification of the body of Christ. Here also, in looking upon the present state of the Church, I see many and grievous things to lament. The ministers are content to use their gifts one day only in seven, and then as little as possible: the week-day services of the churches in our parishes, and in most of our towns, are almost all gone down. I have heard of the ministers of a town conspiring to do away with them. The ministrations with which the meetings of Presbyteries were wont to be begun, are almost or altogether suspended. Domestic ministrations, from house to house, are for the most part discountenanced. The good old custom of requiring a minister, as he passed through your parish, to

give a word of instruction to the people is entirely lost. Like everything else, the work of the ministry is fallen into a mere shred. And if any one steps forth to the multitude, and, Culdee-like, begins to break unto them the bread of life in markets, villages, and on market-days, straightway your sober-minded ministers rail at him as bringing the ministry into disgrace, and your zealous and religious magistrate counts it very dutiful to interdict him from prosecuting such a suspicious calling within the bounds of his jurisdiction. Ah, me! poor souls of the people, wander on and be lost! It is no more a Christian minister's duty to lift up his voice, and call aloud to you in the gates and corners of the streets. Ah, me! Christ's ministers think the people well off if they get a service once in the week; and when the tithe of the population which comes to receive it have been served, the rest, all the rest, may with a clear conscience be left to perish, unpitied, unsought, uncared for. Is this the meaning of being appointed by the Church, and by the State, the minister of such and such a bounds? Surely no. Is this the reason why every other minister is prevented opening his mouth therein without your consent? that you only may have the privilege of starving them? that no one may interfere between you and their destruction? O God, I intercede for my order in the Church. Lay it not to our charge. Remember it not against us. Grant us repentance unto the acknowledgment, and faithfulness unto the declaration of thy truth; over which thou hast constituted us the stewards.

"I know thy *faith*."—The faith which leadeth unto Christ is a work of the Father, without whom no one can know the Son, or ever come unto Him. To the Father, as the fountain-head of power and of knowledge, the Son himself, as Son of man, continually referred back in the days of His flesh; and to Him still referreth all whom He calleth to the imitation of His faith, and the following of His footsteps. The gospel of Christ is the preaching of the Father, as having sent His Son to seek and to save that which was lost. The very name Father, with which our Christian prayers commence, implies that God hath been gracious to mankind, in receiving the representative of them all into the condition of the Son; in which, though in the Divine essence He was from everlasting, He was in the Spirit only from His generation, and in the flesh also only from the resurrection. The gospel therefore, in teaching us to call God Father, teacheth us that for man the highest and most honourable place of being sons of God is fully purchased, and is freely proclaimed throughout this world to every creature under heaven. Preaching, therefore, directeth faith to the Father-God, whom Christ preacheth

away from every other god; and therefore whatever fruits of faith appear must unequivocally be given to that Father from whom Christ in the days of His flesh received all strength and sustenance. The Father of Jesus Christ being received as our God and Father, doth straightway direct us to His only-begotten and first-begotten from the dead, as the source of life and light in this dark and mortal estate, as our deliverer from sin, and the author of an everlasting righteousness, and complete salvation to all who believe. This work the Father performeth by the Holy Ghost, who taketh the things of Christ, and showeth them to our souls. But still it is only outward teaching of the Spirit, such as all the fathers under the law possessed; the very same in kind, though different in degree: God taught them by the words of the Prophets, foreshowing, and by the services of the Law, prefiguring, Him who was to come for our salvation: God teacheth us by the words of Christ and His apostles, and the services of the Church, referring back to the work which Christ hath done for our salvation. Still, however, it is but an outward act, done by presenting to our minds the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; the doer of it is the Holy Ghost; and the originator of it is the Father; and the means by which it is done is the work of Christ. This now is the first kind of faith which was common to a Jew and a Christian, and which requireth no work of regeneration, no translation out of the state of the natural into the state of the spiritual man; and, moreover, it is the only work of faith which is dreamt of in our modern theology; which I am bold enough to pronounce a mere rag of the garment from which it has been torn away.

The second work of God is the work of regeneration; and to this the former is only preparatory. The whole Jewish dispensation is only preparatory to the Christian; the natural to the spiritual; and hath still its place in the progress of a sinner's salvation. All that precedes regeneration is as old as Abraham, and since his day hath undergone no change in the method or principle of it, but only an enlargement and clearing up of the subject. But regeneration is the passing out of the natural into the spiritual. We do in the laver of baptism drown and bury the natural man, and receive a new spiritual subsistence, holding directly of the risen Church, the quickening Spirit. And now we become one substance with Christ in Spirit; as at the resurrection we shall become one substance with Him in body also. In this present life, the Spirit of Christ which is the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, is in us of a very truth, as truly as He was in Christ during the days of His flesh; who was not more truly Son of God by the Spirit, than we are now sons of God by the same Spirit. God, thus dwelling in

us in the person of the Holy Ghost, doth work oneness, perfect oneness with Christ in the Spirit; and this is the feeding faith, the appropriating faith, the faith which participates of His substance, which eats His flesh and drinks His blood. The worker of this uniting faith is also the Holy Ghost, who is ever that person of the Trinity who toucheth the creature, and hath to do with him in the way of giving life of regeneration, and resurrection into life. But for this effect he proceedeth from Christ; into whose hands the Holy Ghost hath been given for the procreation of this spiritual seed; and from whom, when we believe, we receive power to become the sons of God; and are sealed with the Holy Ghost, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. Historically, therefore, the Holy Ghost is exhibited as proceeding from the Father, until the resurrection of Christ, upon His creatures, to take Christ and show Him as their hope, and bring them into His faith: since the resurrection He is exhibited as proceeding from Christ to work a new creature, or the regeneration of the natural man, into a new subsistence; and thus the great doctrine of the Creed, "that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son," receiveth a manifestation in both its parts. But the historical view of any truth is always a broken and incomplete one, and only the means of arriving at the spiritual view which is altogether independent of place and time. The spiritual form of the truth is, that every believer is continually delivered by the Father unto Jesus, and, being received from the Father by Jesus, is fitted of Him for the prerogative of the Son of God, and for the office of one of the Father's kings and priests. And the Holy Ghost which worketh this preparation cometh from the Father and the Son; from the Father to incline our hearts to Jesus, from the Son to prepare and provide us for the service of the Father. The Head of the natural man, of man as he was created, is not manifest, is therefore God the Father, the Head of the spiritual man, of man as he is regenerated, is manifest, is Christ, God manifest in the flesh. One who is brought into the spiritual state by regeneration, hath a double subsistence; the one the natural, the other the spiritual: with the former of which the Father hath ever to do; with the latter of which Christ hath ever to do, as their several heads. The work of the Father, with His natural creature, is to put him to death for Adam's sin: the work of the Son, with His spiritual creature, is to quicken him to life for Christ's righteousness. But these are not two creatures, but one creature, having one will, on which, as being the spiritual part of a man, the Holy Ghost operates. His operation, therefore, is felt double; one from the Father, to mortify the natural man, by making

him willing to sacrifice his wisdom and his prudence, in order to lay hold on the regeneration and nursing of Christ; the other, from Christ, to give him that quickening and milk of life which the Father hath made him willing to desire, and so the Holy Ghost dwelling in us becomes the indwelling of the Father and the Son, the witness of the Father and the Son, the fellowship of the Father and the Son.

Enough, and more than enough, hath been said for a topic of a very large and complex lecture; and yet far less than enough hath been said for the unfolding of the subject: but it must stand as it is, with the risk of being by some considered as tedious, by others as mystical: but no one can deny that it is most important to clear that great point of the orthodox creed, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son in His working of faith in the soul of man. For that faith the angel of the Church of Thyatira is commended: his faith was true and unfeigned; he had root in Christ, and was in a condition to bear fruit. He was built upon the foundation, a living stone of the spiritual temple. He was feeding on the body and blood of Jesus. He was continually willing to put down, and keep down, the natural endowments of his mind, out of an entire conviction of their unprofitableness in themselves; and being better taught by the Father, every faculty came near to Jesus of its own will, and couching low at His feet, yea, crucifying itself on His cross, receiveth from Him a new life, which grows up from babyhood, after the image of the risen Christ, in righteousness and true holiness, in power and joy and glory. So much is included in general, under the acknowledgment of a man's having faith; but if I err not, there is something more specific than this signified.

Amongst the divers gifts of the Holy Ghost mentioned by the apostle, one is entitled faith: "to another faith by the same Spirit," (1 Cor. xii. 9.) And in the commendation of charity, the existence of faith to a very great extent is supposed without charity: "and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing," (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) This carries us almost by a direct reference to the famous rebuke which our Lord administered to His disciples upon His descent from the mount of transfiguration: "Verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you," (Matt. xvii. 20.) Nor was this word confined to those persons who heard Him, or to the apostolical times, or to any age of the Church; for thus it is pronounced by our Lord in the largest language possible, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than

these shall he do; because I go unto my Father," (John xiv. 12.) And when He went to His Father He poured down the gifts of the Holy Ghost with which they did greater works than He had ever done; such as speaking with tongues, and other things proper to their larger commission as ministers of the word: whereas He was only a minister of the circumcision, or sent unto the lost sheep of Judah. Now the faith which is here spoken of and commended in the angel of the Church of Thyatira, is, I take it, not only that saving faith which is the gift of God, and without which there cannot be any union to Christ or participation of His benefits; but also that special gift which fitted a minister for the faithful discharge of his ministry, a continual dependence upon God for the regular supply of that which he was to serve out unto the flock, a continual trust in God to defend him from all the enemies of the truth round about, a continual looking unto Jesus the Head for the nourishment of all the members of the body;—faith for the gift of wisdom and of knowledge which he was called upon to minister, faith for the words in which he should utter it, faith for strength in the midst of trials, faith for the whole flock, that each might receive the supply of the Spirit for ministering to the body that office to which he was called; for herein Christ doth constitute the angel representative of the whole Church, in that with the strength or decline of his graces, the graces of the Church do all strengthen or decline. Without such a mutual sympathy and dependence, the relationship would be merely nominal and not real, for serving an expediency, not for manifesting a verity. And because the Church liveth by her faith, and is delivered out of all extremities by no present or visible help, but by the faith of an invisible Lord, it becomes a very important part of a minister's qualification that he should be filled with faith; to set the example, and give courage to his Church; to go before the flock and boldly face all the wolves and robbers who would scatter and destroy them. Faith, therefore, as a fruit of the Spirit, as well as that faith which is unto the knowledge of Christ and of the Spirit, I conceive to be here signified in our Lord's commendation, "I know thy faith."

"I know thy *patience*." Of this grace we have already discoursed in the lecture upon the Ephesian Church, and have the less need to enlarge upon it in this place. In a very remarkable manner is patience connected in the Scriptures with perfection; as by the Apostle James in these words: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." And this which is

asserted of others is likewise asserted of the Lord in these words: "It became him . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," (Heb. ii. 10.) And again: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," (v. 9.) The Apostle Paul, in like manner, connects his desire of participation in Christ's sufferings and conformity to His death with perfection, (Phil. iii.) And it is also worthy of observation, that our apostle calls the present kingdom of Christ in the Spirit, "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." And the chief Shepherd not only notices this virtue three times over in these epistles; but gives by far the greatest promise to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, "because thou hast kept the word of my patience." What then is there so precious and profitable in the grace of patience? It puts all the other graces to the proof, gives them time to ripen into maturity, and affords us the means of ascertaining in what points they are defective. Like the storm which falls upon the new-built ship, it shows the strength and weakness of the several parts, and enables the shipbuilder to bring his work to perfection. The perfection of a Christian, like the perfection of Christ is, in all things, in the agony and on the cross, to do not His own will but the will of God. All trials are so many temptations of evil, to raise discontent and murmuring, or to make us swerve from the law of our God; and the patient endurance of them is the proof of our steadfastness and immovableness, and never fails to bring from God a rich supply of His own holiness. How beautiful is that saying of Paul's: "God chastiseth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Oh that I could teach to my fellow-sufferers and companions in tribulation what I continually seek to learn; that, ever after God has named His name upon us, He hath His honour at stake, that we should not fall before Satan. His name, so precious to Himself, is in us; and surely He will not fail to support the honour of His own name. Of this truth let our faith take hold, and conquer all assaults of the enemy whatsoever, by the mighty power of God which is in us. If we fail, He hath not denied Himself, but we have doubted and disbelieved Him. Every victory is a victory to Him. How beautiful is that saying of Peter's! "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The baptized man is the arena or field on which Christ offereth battle to the devil, the world, and the flesh. The time of sore trial is the stress of battle, and to win through it is to glorify

God, and bear hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It is a most precious point of character, whether in a man or a Christian, to be able to look upon what is unpleasant, and face what is painful! There is no perfection nor stability without it. A man who habitually shuns what is disagreeable, becomes timorous as a child; whereas, on the other hand, he who endures patiently the evil, becomes stout and hardy, and fit for any service on which the Captain of his salvation may employ him. Now that which enables the soul to bear its courage up under the sore fight of afflictions which it hath to encounter is, first, the assurance of victory, through the indwelling mighty power of God; and, secondly, the assurance of speedy relief by the coming of the Lord. This is James's consolation and encouragement to the brethren: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord;" "Be ye also patient, stablish your heart, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And with Him cometh the reward, which is the third encouragement to patience; and that reward shall be according to our patience: "To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for honour and glory and immortality, eternal life." There is much need that ministers of the gospel begin to prepare themselves with patience for the conflict, for the time of their trial is at hand. The day of mockery and derision, of cold neglect and cruel scorn, of violation of all brotherly affections and Christian bonds, is already dawned. The spirit is revealed in the Church, which will make mockery of everything real and substantial in divine truth, and set at naught the preachers of it, as deceived, and deceivers of the people. Ignorance is about to have a triumph, hypocrisy a reign, in the Church. The substitution of mere names for realities, of theological fictions for divine truths, of man's precepts for the teaching of God, is now at a height, and will trample under foot every bold man who will face it in its career and call it by its proper name of hypocrisy—hypocrisy working by a law, hypocrisy sanctifying itself into a religion. I believe the Pharisees of our Lord's day to be the only counterpart to the religionists, especially the guardians of religion, the religious world of this day. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear and understand what I say, that every man who now hath conscience to discern and faithfulness to preach the truth, must suffer persecution from the ministers of religion, especially from those called evangelical and spiritual. So let them not be astonished; for surely come it will, yea, come it is at this moment when I write. There is not a man who has stiffly stood for the second advent and kingdom of our Lord; for the love of God to all men, in giving His Son to die; for the reality and consubstantiality of Christ's flesh with ours, who

has not drawn down upon him, at least in our Church, the persecutions of the evangelical clergy; who are at this moment the chief impediment to the dissemination of the truth in this land. God give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth; and God give us whom He hath set for the testimony of His truth patience, that we may not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach; counting it all joy, that in behalf of Christ it is given to us, not only to believe or hear, but also to suffer for His sake.

"And thy *works;* and the last to be more than the first."—The preceding good qualities, for which the angel of this Church hath been commended, bespeaks a season of hardship through which he had passed, and by which his graces of faith and patience had been exercised. Perhaps some persecution of the Jews or Gentiles, some tumults of the townsmen, or some other outward violence of Satan, to cut off the Church in its infancy. These trials had been met by the angel of the Church with new diligence in his vocation, with fresh labours in the ministry of the word, and the consolation of the flock, with a more plentiful supply of good works than at the beginning of his ministry. This Christ acknowledgeth: He forgetteth not anything which can be commended: He compareth the latter with the former, and marketh the improvement. This is very sweet and gracious. Oh, that we could remember what a Master He is whom we serve! We always act in the evil spirit of that servant who said, "I know that thou art a hard master, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed." But how wide this is of the truth! How beautifully doth the kindness and love of our chief Shepherd appear in these seven epistles! His words are the words of a gracious and good, of a considerate and indulgent, Master. We have indeed a Bishop to deal with who is the Father and Friend of His clergy. Ah, my fellow-labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, if we should experience faithlessness and foolishness, persecution and ridicule, from our brethren in the ministry, let us look up to Him whose eye is upon the righteous, and whose ear is open to their cry. We have a bosom on which we can rest our sore-pained head; we have an ear into which we can pour our sorrowful hearts; we have a High Priest who can be touched with the fellow-feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted as we are. Therefore go forth and be valiant and do exploits, for He beholdeth and succoureth you. Think not of yourselves at all, but be filled with His glory and power. Exalt His name, and stand for His truth. Lift up your voice, and cry aloud. Be instant in season and out of season. And when they say all manner of evil against you falsely for His name's sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad; and

when ye shall be brought before the rulers of the synagogue or the kings of the earth for His sake, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

THE REBUKE TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA.

One would think that after such an ample commendation for laborious and renewed works, for love and ministry and faith and patience, there was little room for rebuke or reproof of this excellent servant of the Lord. But He who is holy and true, whose eyes are like a flame of fire and His feet are like fine brass, sees otherwise than man seeth. His love is great, but His holiness is co-extensive with His love; and His faithfulness unto His Father ruleth over all. He doth not strike a compromise between the good and the evil, or allow so much of the one to be a compensation for so much of the other. He loves holiness for its own sake: yea, holiness is the form of His love in this world, where sin is present; because without it no man can see the Lord. Nothing will satisfy Him but that we should be holy as our Father in heaven is holy, and holy because He is holy. It is a fatal error with many to excuse their imperfections and infirmities, yea and their wickednesses, by saying that everything which man doth must necessarily partake of his inherent sinfulness: which is, in other words, to believe that Christ is not able to redeem the soul of man from the devil, the world, and the flesh; and that the Holy Ghost is not so powerful to sanctify as they are to defile: which I consider to be little less than blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: and certainly it is very far from the orthodox creed, which maintains that He is irresistible. This way of speaking finds an apology and justification for itself, by another like unto it, which is, that those works of ours which are called good and holy and acceptable are not so in very deed and truth, but only reckoned so of God's complacency, for the sake of Jesus Christ. What a mischief, what a deadly poison is folded up in this innocent and devout form of words, "God accepts our unholy works as holy for Christ's sake." First, it makes God see a thing to be unholy, and yet accept it as holy; that is, admit into His favour and speak in good terms of what is essentially unholy; which is very much like putting a lie into God's mouth. Secondly, it makes Christ the storehouse and treasury of good works, from which a man may eke out the imperfections and cover the blemishes of his own, according to His own disposition and judgment: which is just the doctrine of indulgences in another form. Thirdly, it makes Christ no Redeemer of the creature, the Holy Ghost no Sanctifier of the creature, who continues

as obstinately bent and necessarily prone to sin as ever. And lastly, it makes Christ and the Holy Ghost to have brought God to compromise His holiness, instead of showing His holiness as unimpeachable and most glorious. But, blessed be the Lord, this doctrine of the schools hath no foundation in Scripture, which teacheth, that the whole man, "body, soul, and spirit," may and ought to be "presented a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God," may and ought to prove what is that holy and acceptable and perfect will of God, which asserteth that "he that is born of God cannot sin," and "that he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin:" which glorious work of bringing holiness forth from the fallen mortal creature, is the power of the indwelling Godhead of the Spirit, through union with Christ our Head. It is Christ in us, renewing us after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. It is Christ glorifying God in His own creature, despite the devil's murderous work, and making the creature under the conditions of the fall to bring forth goodness unto God. This capacity of goodness, of perfect and unceasing goodness, we are all baptized into: for baptism is the burial of the natural man, that it may trouble us no more, —the quickening of the spiritual man, that it may serve God for ever. And after baptism we are in the condition of the apostle, who thanks God that he had received the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; and that the law of the Spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin and death. Every sin after baptism committed is without any apology from the fallen and sinful condition of man, out of which we are delivered into the standing of grace and righteousness in Christ Jesus. Such sin is to be traced to unbelief: we believe not in the sufficiency of Christ to do the will of God in our mortal flesh; and out of this unbelief comes the power of the flesh over us. Christ, knowing and being assured of the power and will of God to sustain His own creature, made no hesitation to take up the mortal and corruptible flesh of man, and showed Himself able to make it obedient in all points; and He is able to continue the work, and He is presented as the continuer of the work of making mortal flesh to do the Father's will. But if, as our so-called evangelical ministers cry aloud, it be heresy to believe that Christ took, and bore, and for ever sanctified this flesh of ours, then, indeed, there is no ground for believing that it can be sanctified, but every ground for believing the contrary: and we are left to make of it the best we can; a poor compromise at the best, a botch, a failure so far as this life is concerned; God defeated on this earth, in this creature flesh. Oh, what awful issues are dependent upon this question, which hardly musters a dozen ministers that think it important enough to write or

speak of it; hardly half-a-dozen who will bide the brunt of fierce and fiery conflict. But "fear not, little flock; it is the good pleasure of the Father to give you the kingdom."

Not so the great Bishop and Overseer of our souls, who, knowing the power given to His saints of being holy, as He is holy, to His Church of being entirely purged from the leaven of malice and unrighteousness, an unleavened lump, doth after this full commendation of His servants' works, charity, ministry, faith and patience, proceed to point out a few things which He had against him, whereof the sum is expressed in these words: "Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols," (ii. 20.) There is only one point of difference between this office in the Church of Thyatira, and that in the Church of Pergamos; that here it is a woman calling herself a prophetess, there it was men who held and taught the doctrine,—the one the office of Jezebel, the other the office of Balaam. The apostle had forbidden women to speak in the Church, but to be silent and learn from their husbands with all obedience, (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) But in the same Epistle to the Corinthians he makes it manifest by the way in which he teaches prophetesses to carry themselves, when they prophesied, (1 Cor. xi. 5;) that the spirit of prophecy was given to the women even as to the men, according to the prophecy of Joel; and that, when so given, it was their custom to exercise the gift in the Church, even as the men: and he teacheth them how they ought to do it, without extravagance or imitation of the heathen Pythonesses. Moreover, that the Spirit is free, and was wont to endow women with the gift of prophey, is manifest from many parts of Scripture besides this: (Acts ii. 17,) "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;" (Acts xxi. 9,) "Philip the evangelist had four daughters virgins, which did prophesy." And surely if we men who minister the word claim our right and ability to do so from the Holy Spirit, we may not limit him so as to say he may not as heretofore give that gift to a woman, or that a woman receiving it may not use it. In the two passages referred to above, the apostle merely forbids women who had no gift from speaking in the Church and troubling the congregation with questions which were better answered by their husbands at home. For while (1 Tim. ii. 8) the office of prayer in all places is appointed to the men, he commands the women to keep silence, (ver. 11.) The truth seems to be therefore, that silence in the Church was imposed upon a woman in every case save where the Holy Spirit opened her mouth; and in all such cases, while she was at liberty, yea, and under the

obligation of using her gift, she ought to use it with the modesty which becometh a woman, and with a deference to the authority of the angels of the Church. The passage to which I allude is in 1 Cor. xi. 10: "For this cause ought the woman to have power over her head, because of the angels:" by which I understand, that when a woman prophesied, she should not do so with dishevelled hair and frantic gestures, but with her head covered, and in a modest manner, in deference to the angels of the Church. She ought, were it only for their sake, to observe the rules the apostle there prescribes, both for the prophesyings and the prayers of such women as were gifted of the Holy Ghost for, and called by Him to, these ministries. This also shows us, by inference, that it was the power and dignity of the angels to take oversight of all persons; even of those in whom the Spirit dwelt in a manner, and with a power, in which He dwelt not in them. He stood there representing Christ, the Head of all the ministries; and to Him all the ministers of all the gifts must pay their reverence, and defer as their overruler. Now, the angel of the Church of Thyatira had been remiss in this part of his sacred function, and had permitted one, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and to practise grievous errors in the midst of the Church. She was not a prophetess, but she claimed to be one; and haply she had the gift, though certainly she had not the grace of it: "for many shall come in the day of judgment, saying unto Christ, Have we not prophesied in thy name? unto whom he shall say, I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Doubtless this woman must have had some gifts, to deceive so good and faithful a man, to mislead so many of His flock. It might be that she had the power of miracles and prophecy, being possessed by an unclean spirit, such as that which spoke forth the name and divinity of Christ, "I know thee who thou art, the Christ, the Son of the living God." For certainly the evil spirits have great power, as we see by the magicians of Egypt, and the soothsayers mentioned in the Acts, and those prophesied of in this very book, when speaking of the mystical Jezebel, (Rev. xiv. 14.) Now, all such false spirits were to be tried by their doctrines, whether they agree with the truth of God, as written in His word, and approved by the conscience of an honest-hearted man. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." The angel of the Church of Thyatira had been negligent of this part of his duty; and, instead of trying this woman's pretensions by her doctrine, had permitted her to sow the seeds of error in his flock. As a prophetess he permitted her to teach and seduce the servants of Christ away from their duties to their Lord and Husband, to join them-

selves to the idolatries round about, and to partake in their idol feasts. It is remarkable how the offence reproved by the Head of the Church, in these Epistles to Ephesus, to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, should be constantly the intermingling of His holy service with the unholy services of the heathen; pointing out to us the way in which the apostasy was working, and should work unto the end; by the amalgamation of things contrary and contradictory, the service of God and the service of demons. The Church of Christ is placed by regeneration of the Holy Ghost in a dignity of its own, spiritual and divine, above sin and death, above the flesh and the world; from which to descend and mix with the abominations of the heathen, or even with the fleshly ordinances of the law, is like the angels leaving their habitation and intermarrying with the daughters of men; to which confusion the deluge is ascribed, (Gen. vi.,) by the example of which the Church also is warned from apostasy, (2 Pet. ii. and Jude 6.) It is remarkable, moreover, that in none of the three following churches is there any allusion to this unnatural sin of the spiritual seed mingling with the carnal; as if the first four epistles had historical reference to a state of the Church distinct from that referred to in the three last. In the midst of each division, there is one Church which standeth faithful; among the former, that of Smyrna; among the latter, that of Philadelphia: which distinction will come to be more fully examined hereafter. For the present, we observe, that the common sin of these three churches, Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira, is exactly the same with that set forth in the history of the woman and the beast, (Rev. xii. xiii. xvii.;) when the two most violently opposed systems of Christ, and of Paganism, at length meet together and harmonise into one, which ends in the destruction of both. If death be the consequence of Adam's transgression, the wages of sin; then the deluge, and the destruction of Sodom, and the conflagration of the earth by fire, are the consequence of attempting to mingle and confuse righteousness and unrighteousness, holiness and sin, the seed of God and the seed of Satan. The Church are the children of God; the world are the children of the evil one. While these two continue separate, God's end of testifying against iniquity is served: when they intermingle, His end is lost, and the world must be destroyed. This is a great truth, into which I cannot at present enter more particularly.

But, even to this woman, whether considered personally as the troubler of the Church of Thyatira, or typically as the mother of harlots who was to trouble the Church of Christ, God gave space to repent. And so also He did to the antediluvians, when He appointed them a time of 120 years, during which the ark was a-pre-

paring, to warn them of their coming judgment, that they might repent of their wickedness. And Noah, being God's faithful witness, and obedient servant in preparing the ark, did thereby condemn the world which then was. So also Lot, by living in the midst of Sodom, and keeping himself from their pollutions, did condemn that and the neighbour cities of the plain; who also had a warning by the hand of Chederlaomer, and a deliverance at the hand of Abraham, the father of the faithful. And when for their unnatural wickedness (Rom. i.) God raised up Christ to be the Judge of all men, he gave them space for repentance, and sent His gospel to be a witness unto all nations, amongst which His Church, like Noah, continue to build the spiritual ark of salvation, with its open door and plentiful rooms for all men to enter in and be saved. But the time shall wear out, the witnesses of God shall cease, their prophecy against the wickedness and profanation of the Gentiles, and the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men shall at length arrive. To show forth the liberty of repentance unto all, this poor deluded woman, who lived to delude the servants of God, had space for repentance, even as also had Simon Magus. "I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not." So also do we find that the servants of the whore, who had the mark of the beast, and the number of his name, have after the sixth trumpet space to repent, but they repent not, (Rev. x. 21.) Also after the fifth vial, (xvi. 9,) which, if we interpret aright, in the time of peace, which has now continued for fifteen years, but they will not repent, and therefore when the sixth vial upon the Mohammedan powers is exhausted, then judgment, the final judgment of the quick, falls heavy upon them in the time of the seventh vial. Oh, how admirable is the long-suffering of God, and how obdurate the impenitency of men! That woman Jezebel repented not in the Church of Thyatira; nor will her antitype, the mother of harlots, which sits upon seven hills, repent. She is now as full of her murders, and sorceries, and fornications, and thefts as ever she was; and so will she continue until destruction come upon her like a whirlwind. The door of admission into the bride-chamber shall be shut, and no one shall be able to enter in. They shall stand and cry aloud, but they shall not be heard. They shall be carried away in their desperation to conceive terrible thoughts of evil upon the earth, against the Lord and His anointed, and they shall perish in the midst of their deceivings, and blasphemies, and horrid undertakings. Of all which, the manner, as well as the certainty, is shown forth in God's dealings with this woman Jezebel.

Vers. 22, 23: "Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that

commit adultery with her into great tribulation; except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you, according to your works." There is some difficulty in coming at the exact meaning of the threatening, "I will cast her into a bed." Some think it means a sick-bed, disabling her from the further prosecution of her mischievous practices; but this is not equal to her offence, nor yet commensurate with the punishment of her paramours, who are "cast into great tribulation," nor of her children, who are "killed with death." The best interpretation seems to me to be, that as the bed had been the place of her fornication, so should it be of her judgment; which judgment is common to her with her fornicators. That they and she, caught in the act of their fornication, should, as were the prince of Israel and the Moabitish woman, by the hand of Phinehas, have judgment executed upon them. She had had time to repent, but would not; and therefore she should have no notification of the judgment, but at once, in one hour, while she enjoyed her wickedness, and in the midst of it, should the wrath of the great tribulation alight upon her and her paramour. The expression, "I will cast her into a bed," to my mind therefore presents the evil case and condition in which she should be apprehended, and it gives introduction and force to the following expression, "those who commit adultery with her;" while the punishment of both follows in these words, "great tribulation." Yet is this tribulation such as permits to them still a space for repentance; but none to her any more. However it be, whether the punishment of both be contained in the same words, or whether there be contained under the expression, "I will cast her into a bed," some severe judgment which I do not at present perceive; this is clear, that while she receives her final sentence, they have a further space for repentance. Now, it is very remarkable to find how this is confirmed in God's dealings with the mystical Jezebel, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication." She comes to her end before them; and they are represented as bewailing her, and lamenting for her, when they shall see "the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torments," (Rev. xviii. 9, 10.) And so also do all the classes of the earth, who knew her in the pride of her glory and boasting, when she said in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." There is

then a space left for the kings of the earth during which they confederate together, and make war with the Lamb, and perish utterly in their undertaking. This coincidence between God's dealings with that woman Jezebel and the whore of Babylon, which corrupted the whole earth, is made the more remarkable from the expression, "great tribulation," which is once more spoken of in this book, as that out of which the white-robed and palm-bearing company came. "These are they that come out of great tribulation," (Rev. vii. 14.) And when we refer to the seventh vial, which is the great tribulation, the great earthquake, when all the winds get loose to rend the earth, we find immediately before it (Rev. xvi. 15) mention made of a company who are warned to keep their garments; being the last portion of that glorious company of martyrs who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This time of the coming of the Lord is so remarkable for the distress of nations which shall then be felt on earth, that it is often referred to in the Gospels, and by the very name of the time of the great tribulation: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," (Matt. xxiv. 21.) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened . . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in the heavens," (vers. 29, 30; see also Mark xiii. 19, 24.) These coincidences I cannot look upon as accidental, connected as they all are with the coming of the Lord; and being taken in conjunction with the observations made at the outset of this second part of our lecture; they are to be looked upon as strong confirmations of the view which we have taken of this epistle as having a reference to the mother of harlots, as well as to the woman in the Church of Thyatira, and so discovering to the primitive churches the varieties of those temptations with which Christ's Catholic Church was to be assailed.

The meditation of these things has several times suggested to my mind the idea that by the bed here spoken of is signified the lake of fire into which the woman and her paramour, or, in other words, the beast and the false prophet, are cast at the conclusion of the judgment: but wanting Scripture authority for thus speaking of hell as a bed, I have shrunk from giving it the form of an interpretation, and mention it merely as a conjecture. It is said in one of the Psalms, "Though I make my bed in hell." And if casting him into a bed, signify the bed of mortal agony, and death itself, then is hell the bed of the second death. This interpretation, if it could be brought out clearly as such, would also give great force to the diversity of treatment between her and her children, of whom it is said that they

are killed with death: "And I will kill her children with death." For in the last judgment, when the beast and the false prophet who consummated the adultery were cast into the lake of fire together, the kings of the earth, and their captains, and their mighty men, are slain with the sword of Him who sat upon the horse. The one is a continued torment, the other is an instant death. This would give still a higher significancy to "the great tribulation," as that state of torment during the millennium which even the devil is spared from enduring, and which is described in these words of chap. xiv.: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

However this may be, whether it is to be looked upon as just interpretation, or mere analogy, one thing is certain from the comparison of this judgment with that of the Church of Pergamos; namely, that the highest aggravation of wickedness is when the Church herself becomes the seducer, when she, who should have remained the model of chastity and virtue, becomes the pander to all wickedness, the seducer of the magistrates, and the kings, and the peoples of the earth into all idolatry. This is the exact difference between the Papal and the Protestant Churches. The Papal is the seducer, the Protestant is the seduced. The former is artfully deceiving the nations, and leading them away from Christ; the latter are tempted by the powers that be to love and kiss them instead of Christ. The former is the unnatural, the latter is the natural state of wickedness. That we should be tempted is our calling; that we should yield to temptation, is our sin; but that we should become the tempter, is a sin of a far deeper dye. No one can deny that the churches of this land have sore and grievously gone astray after the desire of carnal ornaments and endowments from the State; and that at this moment they are sore enthralled to the powers that be, and make a most shameful compromise of duty between Christ and the powers of this present evil world. But there is another stage in wickedness, when they shall become the creatures of the State, to the prevention of the truth, or to the hindrance and destruction of those who hold it. If ever this should come to pass, and God only knows how near or how distant it is, then verily destruction shall come upon us to the very uttermost. It is not yet clear to me in

what way we are to be induced, or by what means we are to be prevented; but this I clearly perceive, that it is a time of great peril, from which I continually pray that the Lord may deliver us.

"And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."—The language of this passage is taken almost verbally from the prophecies of Jeremiah, (xvii. 10:) "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." The expression, "I search the heart and the reins," is a common form in Scripture for the deep knowledge and thorough scrutiny of God, (Ps. vii. 9; xxvi. 2;) because the reins were looked upon amongst the Hebrews, and still are in the Eastern parts of the world, as the seat of the deepest and inmost affections, even more inward than the heart itself. Wherefore in the 16th Psalm Christ saith of Himself, "My reins also instruct me in the night season," to signify that the workings of His soul within, under the power of the Holy Ghost, His holy reflections upon the deep counsels of God, were a continual instruction to Him. And in Psalm lxiii. 21, the Psalmist (whoever he be) representeth himself, when under agonising doubts concerning an overruling Providence, as being "grieved in his heart, and pricked in his reins," expressing that sensation to which every man of deep feeling must often have been conscious of a thrilling, and more than thrilling, a prickling sensation, in that part of the body where the reins or kidneys are seated. Like the "moving of the bowels," under yearning affection; and "the breaking of the heart," through long continued and sore grief; the "pricking of the reins," is used to express very deep and inward emotion. To search the heart and the reins, is therefore to go into the inward parts of a man, and inspect him through and through. No man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man which is in him; this, which no creature knoweth, God knoweth, and thereby is His knowledge distinguished from that of every creature. Of His word—that is, the personal word, with whom "we have to do," it is written, (Heb. iv. 12, 13,) "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." While this expression, "I am He which searcheth the reins and the heart," is in constant use to express the all-searching eye of God, I do not find that it is anywhere in Scripture, save in the passage of Jere-

miah above referred to, connected with the retribution and recompence, "giving unto every one according to his works;" and it may therefore be regarded, if not as a quotation, certainly as a distinct reference to that place of the prophet where the discourse is concerning the judgment of the Lord upon Judah; and curses are denounced upon the man who makes flesh his arm, blessings upon the man that trusteth in the Lord. Then, to put away all hypocrisy and prevarication, He saith, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I Jehovah search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways." And then He instructs the prophet to go and summon the kings of Judah to repent, even then at the eleventh hour, and the Lord would remove His threatnings every one, and establish their thrones for ever. And so in the passage before us, Christ presenting Himself to the Church of Thyatira, with these eyes like flames of fire, doth describe, first the faithful angel who stood as His representative, then the impure woman who led His servants astray; and then declares that He is conversant with the utmost working of every heart, and will come to recompense every one according to His works: Wherefore, saith He, repent, ye followers of that wicked woman; and ye who have stood true, hold fast that which ye have till I come. There is no doubt that this woman had proceeded with great hypocrisy, in order to be able to escape the detection of so vigilant and faithful a bishop of the Church. She and her followers said, that they knew the very depths of Satan; and they were wont to make their boast of their familiarity with his wiles, of their power to deliver themselves out of all his snares: and the deceitful serpent suffered them to sport with his name, and play themselves with the beauty of his crest, and the many foldings of his tail, until he had them grasped firmly in his hold, and thoroughly imbued with his poison. To great power of seduction, she had added great craftiness, and brought the people into great depths of Satan, where their minds were utterly lost and astray. No doubt there was a good seeming, and a fair show in the flesh; words which savoured of the truth, plausible interpretations of deep mysteries, and outward form of godliness: she claimed inspection of the Spirit; and she gave forth her doctrines as true prophecies. Perhaps she was self-deceived, and used by the devil to deceive others: certainly it was a system of deep and dark delusion; whose darkness to penetrate Christ presenteth Himself with the eyes of fire, whose wickedness to destroy He presenteth Himself with the feet of fine brass; and to give them warning to repent He chooseth this attribute of the omniscient Jehovah, and claims it as His own: "I am He that

searcheth the heart and the reins, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works;" not according to your words, but according to your works; not according to your fair pretensions, but according to your real performances. About every system of falsehood there is a system of disguise and deception. Satan cannot do good, he can only do evil; and so far forth as we are under his dominion, we can only do evil. The overtures and beginnings of things by Him overruled always put on the appearance of good; but in the progress they turn about, and end in fierce unadulterated wickedness. He will not lend his aid to keep on a good cause; if he get his hand into it, it is only to destroy and subvert it. Therefore Christ saith, "I will give unto every one of you according to your works." There is a certainty in that test of the true prophets from false ones given by the Lord, "By their fruits ye shall know them:" a preacher of lies can no more bring forth the fruits of holiness and love than a briar can bring forth grapes. Hence all the heresies in the primitive Church ended in, and indeed were accompanied by, the most gross and fearful depravity. It is indeed from the flesh that heresies spring, (Gal. v. 20:) some lust in the heart desireth liberty in the mind, and setteth on the faculty of wresting truth, nor suffereth it to rest until it hath got the word of God brought over to speak a lie, and to consent to its sensuality, whereupon it begins and enacts wickedness by a law under the sanction of the name of God. There is a heresy, and that a great one, upon two points at present in the Church: either they are heretical who say that God loved and Christ died for only a part of men, or we who say that God loveth and His Son died for all: either they are heretical, who say that Christ came in flesh different conditioned in itself from ours, or we who say that He came in flesh of our flesh, conditioned in all respects as ours is, and owing its sanctification to the power of the Holy Ghost in it. Now, let those who are unlearned, or unstable, look to see the fruits in the lives and in the flocks of those who hold the one and the other of those doctrines. For it cannot be, as I said, that a heresy can originate anywhere but in the carnal man, or promote anything but carnality of mind, and produce anything but fruits of flesh; such as "hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, envyings, and such like." Look well to it, all ye people who are confused with the subtleties of ingenious and speculative men. Your Lord hath given you a test which will never fail you. If a man hold the truth, he is bound to give proofs of it in a holy walk and conversation; because this is appointed by the Lord as one of the means by which others shall judge of it. The truth may be held without these fruits: but in such a case it is but an opinion, it is not

a principle; a speculation of the intellect, not a reality of our being. It is not the truth in the love of it, unless it yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

By this judgment which the great Head and Purifier of the Church threatens against the woman Jezebel and her followers, it is said that *all the churches should know* that He searcheth the heart and the reins. This indicates a universality in the manifestation of the judgment, which ill comports with the notion that these epistles were only for a time and season of the churches; but agrees well with the notion we have been working with, that they are intended for all times, and all conditions of the Christian churches. Moreover it sanctions the notion which we have been unfolding in the last two lectures, that while the circumstances of those several churches had a real and an exact application to the local Church of which they are recorded, they have besides a typical and prophetical application to certain conditions under which the Church should in successive periods be placed. For this judgment of the woman Jezebel, who troubled the Church of Thyatira, hath not reached the knowledge of all the churches; seeing there is no record left of it, nor of her on whom it fell, and hardly of the Church in which it occurred. To interpret, therefore, the circumstances connected with this woman, literally of her, and obstinately to refuse any typical or historical use of them, is not only to make void, but, I think, to falsify the solemn declaration, that thereby "all the churches should know" Christ's discernment through all veils of hypocrisy, and His punishment of all unrighteousness. But understanding it figuratively of that mother of harlots, that adultress wife of the beast, the head of the ten kings—as Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, the head of the Ten Tribes—it containeth a very grand truth, which in the fulness of times shall be manifested. For the beast and his spouse the false prophetess and their children, being cast into the lake of fire, and tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb, shall indeed be an example and a terror to all the churches which shall exist during the millennial period of the Church; as well as a manifestation to all saints in the New Jerusalem, or out of it, of the knowledge and righteousness which is in the Judge of all the earth. That judgment of the false prophetess and her adherents, shall be the wonder and the admiration of all heaven and of all the earth. As witness the astonishment of the tribes of the earth set forth in the 18th chapter, and the hallelujahs of the hosts of heaven which follow after. As in the judgments contained in the Old Testament, the end of them all is ever said to be, for to declare the righteousness of Jehovah; so, under the New Testa-

ment, the judgment of the beast and the false prophet is to declare the righteousness of the Son of man during the millennial period of the earth, that we may be as much deterred from evil by this awful spectacle, as they are encouraged to good by the glorious reward of His saints in the New Jerusalem. And to this refer also these last words of Isaiah the prophet: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh," (Isa. lxvi. 23, 24.) In one word, I think, and almost believe, that during the millennial period of the earth, there will be a manifested hell in the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, as well as a manifested heaven in the city of the New Jerusalem, which is the abode of the saints and the tabernacle of God and of the Lamb. These two conditions, of the faithful who overcame, and the faithless who yielded to the temptress; of those who gave ear to the voice of wisdom, and of those who listened to the wiles of the wanton woman, (Prov. vii. 7, and everywhere,) shall be the two decided and decisive cases to which the attention of the world shall be turned; the two great proofs of that future dispensation, which is a dispensation of works and judgment according to works, as this is a dispensation of justification by faith, or condemnation on account of unbelief. I may deceive myself, but it seems to me that all this, and much more, is taught in the denunciation passed upon the Jezebel of the Church of Thyatira. She and her adherents are the persons on whom the subjects of the last great down-trampling and breaking into pieces are denounced of, just as the victorious of that Church are the persons in whom those who shall tread down and rule with an iron rod are spoken of. No one hesitates to believe that the saints of Thyatira are not the only persons who shall rule the world with the rod of iron, and break it in pieces like a potter's vessel; and why should any one think that Jezebel, her paramours, and her children, are the only ones who shall be cast into that fiery bed, broken in that direful tribulation, and slain with that overflowing death? They also represent a class, those who are seduced by the false prophetess and mother of harlots; and in them is depicted the manner of the retribution which shall come upon one form of iniquity, that of being a member of the seducing Church. And, in one word, it is a great principle of interpretation, which more and more clearly appeareth, that wherever, in these epistles, two parties are set against each other, they

are not only real actors in those churches, but made representatives of a set of actors which shall be in all times; and in their several treatment of Christ, teacheth the several judgments which, to the end and in the end, shall come upon these classes in His Church. And thus universal truth is taught upon particular instances, as, in the Old Testament, with Pharaoh and the Assyrian, and Babylon and Tyre, &c.; and the method of prophecy from first to last appeareth to be one.

There remaineth but one topic more to exhaust this second part of our subject, and conclude the message to the angel—which is, the instructions of Christ to the faithful in the Church, couched in these words: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come," (vers. 24, 25.) Upon the authority of the best manuscripts, Guerbail makes no hesitation in throwing out the word *and* in the clause, "unto you and the rest in Thyatira;" which makes it, being literally translated, "but unto you, those that are left in Thyatira." This removes out of the way the difficulty of discovering who are meant by *the rest*. The angel is addressed always in the singular number, *thou, thy;* when *you* is used in the place under consideration, we understand him and his people; and who "the rest" could be, was a question which we had no means of resolving, till we found that the better reading was, "to you who are left,"—that is, from this seducer who had her paramour and her children in the Church; "to those that shall remain true to my word and service;" as we would say, "to the remnant." This bears as if she had been but too successful in her arts of deception and delusion; that she had carried away the greater number; that the Church was leavened with her abominations, and only some left in their steadfastness. This also agrees well with the historical application of the passage to Babylon, the mother of harlots, who succeeded in carrying away the whole Church, save those hundred and forty-four thousand who had the seal of the Father on their forehead, and followed the Lamb whithersoever He went. The original Jezebel had corrupted all the prophets, or driven them out of sight, save only Elijah—"and I am left alone;" but the Lord had still reserved unto Him seven thousand knees who had not bowed to Baal. The mystical Jezebel caused all men, both small and great, both bond and free, to receive a mark upon their foreheads and their hands; but the Lord reserved to Himself one hundred and forty and four thousand who obtained the victory over her mark and the number of her name. And here,

when the mystical Jezebel and her doings are set forth in the actual condition of a Church, the great multitude are stolen away, and the faithful are spoken of as "those that are left." They are further described as "those who have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak." The doctrine I understand to be, that of accommodating the Church's discipline to the heathen customs, and permitting, under the disguise of charity and good fellowship, spiritual fornication, which always paves the way to the natural or carnal crime. For in proportion as you have a pure Church, you have chaste women; and when the Church is apostate, and a pander to power and wealth, you will find women and wives seducers of young men. The state of morals in France and Italy compared with Britain—the state of morals in England, compared with Scotland, fifty years ago—will testify to this. It is almost unknown in this country for a woman who has not herself been seduced to seduce a man; it is not so in Papal countries, where the Church is an abominable harlot. This wretched condition of the Church began in that Nicolaitane practice of homologating with the Pagan worship, as far as could be; first in the pride of knowledge and in the pleasure of worldly friendship, then in the fear of persecution, then in the desire of gain like Balaam, and now behold it is perfected into the most gorgeous system of deception. But still through it all there is a faithful remnant whom the Lord comforts with words of strong assurance, (xiii. 9, 10,) whom in the end he delivers with an high hand and an outstretched arm, and straightway brings along with Him to trample the abominable wickedness under foot. Those in Thyatira who refused this doctrine of the false prophetess are further characterised by these words, "which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak." This, I suppose, refers to some cant saying amongst her disciples, expressive of their self-confidence, and in contempt of the more humble and heedful brethren who rather chose to avoid the snares of Satan than to trust themselves amongst them. The Apostle Paul, in his own actings, was very careful "lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices," (2 Cor. ii.;) and likewise was he jealous over them "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." And he speaks of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if His ministers also be transformed into the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works," (2 Cor. xi.) The depths of

Satan, into which these infatuated persons were plunged, I conceive to be the intricacies and subtleties of delusion, the depths of error, the mazes of wandering, the endless questions and strifes of words, which were so rife in that age of the Church, and always are when the truth as it is in Jesus is preached in simplicity. But when, as in these our times, it is locked up in the concealments of an intricate theology, when the catechisms of system have supplanted the words of Christ, which are spirit and life, Satan is little careful to perplex what is already perplexed enough; the web is already woven, the net is already laid to his hand; his game is to wile people into it, to confine them with its niceties and subtleties, and leave them there; to give the words a nominal and conventional signification, and take from them the spiritual force of truth, and so leave them to ring with their pleasant lullaby souls asleep in carnal and orthodox security. But once let men arise to let day-light into this roost of darkness; once let men arise to give a basis of reality to these superstructures of the abstract intellect, and straightway he will raise such a gabble about words, such subtle refinements, such sophisms, as will bring back the endless questions of the apostles' times. This state of things I perceive to be fast arising in the Church. I see hundreds of armed dialecticians sallying forth in the panoply of theological armour, against single champions of the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. And what then is the man of God to do? Avoid their foolish questions and wire-drawn arguments; leave them to themselves, and those whom they befool: but stand thou for the truth, and be instant to preach it in season and out of season. Resist their false doctrines, condemn them, warn the Church against them; and when you meet them personally withstand them, as Paul did Peter; but trouble yourself not at all with their logical refinements, their rhetorical flourishes, their cruel mockings, their contemptuous flings, against the truth: let these die out of mind as fast as possible; and bring thou before the people the great things and the true things of God, the simple and the plain things of Jesus Christ, that He loved us, and took flesh to sanctify and quicken it, is working in us the same blessed effects, and coming with all His saints to reign upon the earth. Reiterate the truth in all places, and leave them if they can to beat it down, but they cannot. Peradventure God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. "The depths of Satan" here spoken of, I conceive, however, to be something very different from those gambols which the natural intellect is now playing off in the sanctuary of the truth. Protestantism is not the place for the manifestation of Satan's deep plots and machinations against the truth. He appears amongst us

either as a heady high-minded scoffer, or as a swaggering bravo, contemning all mysteries, and with the sword of the intellect showing how he can strip them naked and bare. In his hatred of the truth he is the same, but in his practices different. It was his contempt, as a Protestant liberal, of his own depths as a Papal deceiver, which carried his great measure against the civil state of Britain. He said in the mouths of many of our divines, "Oh! let us meet them on equal terms, and we shall soon vanquish them." Thus to gain his ends will he not only bear to be scoffed at, but even stir up the scoffer. How constantly doth he permit his servants to name his name with a laugh! being content to have them on any terms; and to quiet their fears of him by permitting them to make merriment at the mention of his name. He knows that a day of recompence is coming, in which he shall be able to exercise all his inclinations upon them. Ah! he is dangerous game. Thus he permitted himself to be entreated by these followers of Jezebel. They talked familiarly of them, knowing the depths of Satan; they were lifted up with pride, and fell into his snare. The Lord preserve us from all such vain confidence! I do not stop to point out how this also coincides with the Papacy, to which Satan gave his seat and his power and great authority.

To those in Thyatira who were left faithful in the midst of these seductions of Satan and his minion, the Lord says that He will put upon them none other burden; to signify that His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light, was not to be added to on any account whatever; that the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love, were to continue as the burden of His Church; and her only yoke to turn unto God from idols, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Forms and ceremonies, rites and ordinances, restrictions and severities of every kind, as a part of His religion, the Lord and Master of the Church here doth discountenance and set aside, unless expedient for the ends of godliness, and profitable to the good order of the Church. Times and days may be set apart, and stated seasons of worship and service appointed, and, under the same rule of expediency, dresses and other symbols of office may likewise be permitted; but they are not, and never can, without offence to this ordinance of Christ, pass into the obligation of law, or be made terms of Christian communion: they must remain in the lower place of human inventions to serve good ends, and can never be permitted to occupy the place of divine ordinances to convey the benefits of salvation. This word of Christ's, "I will put upon you none other burden," is sufficient justification to any one who shall say, These ordinances of the Church I cannot receive nor obey, if

they be imposed upon me as conditions to my salvation, or preliminaries to the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, or conditions to my abiding in the communion of the Church; because the Church hath no such power bequeathed to her by her Head: yea, and is expressly forbidden to make any such additions to the necessary and indispensable obligations of a Christian: and if any Church should excommunicate any of her members on this account, she would be guilty of lording it over the heritage of God, and they would be innocent of any schism or breach in the body of Christ. This is a great question, which for two centuries agitated the Protestant Church, and almost brought the Church of Scotland to her grave. Those ceremonies which the Church of England hath retained she would have imposed upon us: this we resisted; and for this, as a Church, we stand excommunicated by her unto this day: our ordination not recognised. Nevertheless, the Lord hath justified our faithfulness, and rewarded our patience, and blessed us, as the mother of the people, beyond any Church in Christendom. Whence, indeed, hath sprung pride; and, along with pride, vanity, and cruelty, and self-sufficiency: but God is not without His witness in the bosom of that Church; yea, and that a witness which is now speaking to all Christendom.

On the other hand, while I thus stand up for Christian liberty, I am far from encouraging insubordination of the ruled to their rulers, of the Christian people to the Christian ministry. The power of the rulers in the Church, being derived from Christ, is to be guided and limited by His instructions, to which we must not add, from which we must not take away. But to carry these ordinances of the Universal Bishop into effect, we must take order according to some method and form, which may seem to our wisdom and to the Holy Ghost most expedient thereto: and the Church must give heed to her overseers, and obedience to their decisions; and this they do in honour of that office which the Head of the Church hath conferred upon certain of His members. But if these office-bearers should require obedience to their precepts, however wise, upon the pain and peril of excommunication, it ought to be resisted, as an imposition upon the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus; for it is requiring of us to observe what Christ hath not required to be observed, in order to eternal life. The end of the matter is, that the holy Scripture is the test to which every decision and deliverance of the Church must be brought; and if any private Christian see in his conscience that it is not consistent therewith, or contradictory thereto, he is bound, by the ordinance of his God, to disobey the ordinance of the Church, in so far forth as he sees the inconsistency, but no further; and if

for so doing he suffer the last penalty of excommunication, he suffers it not as a schismatic, but as a Christian, and the Spirit of glory and of his God resteth on him: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on God's part he is glorified. Well is it said, therefore, "I will put upon you none other burden;" and full well is it added, "Hold fast that which ye have till I come."

I cannot suppose that these words refer to anything save those commandments and ordinances which Christ left in His Church, and of which we have the particulars in the Apostolical Epistles. Sometimes I have been inclined to suppose that the burden here spoken of is the same with that which was imposed by the Council of Jerusalem upon the churches, in these words: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well," (Acts xv. 28, 29.) And what seems to confirm this notion is, that the woman Jezebel taught her followers to set at nought two out of the four injunctions contained in this decree: she seduced the servants of the Lord to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. But if this interpretation of the burden mentioned in the text be admitted, then doth it bring along with it the obligation of abstaining from blood, and from things strangled, as still enforced upon the Church; for Christ commandeth to hold fast that burden which we have until He come. If, however, the interpretation were otherwise made sure, it would be our duty to adopt it, whatever might be the consequence. But, for two reasons, I cannot bring myself to receive it: First, because the scope of the epistle is, as we have said, of works in general; and therefore it were going against the largeness of the purpose of Christ in inditing it, to restrict its application to those four prohibitions of the Council of Jerusalem: Secondly, because the decree of that council, in some part of it at least, can only be interpreted as temporary, seeing the reason assigned for it is temporary and local: "for Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every sabbath day," (Acts xv. 21.) This shows that some part, at least, of the decision was an expedient for the sake of peace; a compromise and surrender of Christian liberty, for the sake of the weakness and prejudice of others. And the question is, Which part of the ordinance is for this temporary end? Fornication is not so, neither is abstinence from idol feasts; both of these are points of morality and religion, which depend not upon time and place, but are of a constant obligation. It remains, therefore, that abstinence

from blood, and from things strangled, are the temporary restrictions put upon the Church; whereof the former contravened the covenant made with Noah, and the latter the Levitical ordinance of uncleanness. And accordingly, when the occasion ceased for observing these expedient abridgments of Christian liberty, the observation likewise ceased, and the Church resumed her freedom; but not so with the other two ordinances, which are of continual force. On these accounts, though startled at first with the apparent coincidence of matter, and even of word, between the apostolic precept and the injunction before us, I have seen it good to look upon this coincidence as only accidental, and to adopt the broad interpretation given above.

The burden, therefore, which the Church is commanded to hold fast till Christ come, is, in the first place, and above all, that reasonable service of presenting body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. It is not bodily service, (which profiteth little;) it is not ordinances and ceremonies, whether of Jewish or of Pagan origin; it is not imposition of lordly and arbitrary ministers, which is signified in that burden of Christ: but it is holiness unto the Lord; it is love to God and love to men; it is pure and heavenly morality; it is the resistance of the devil, the world, and the flesh; it is the experience of that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. It is not Sabbath-keeping, or holy-day-keeping, but it is the keeping of a continual Sabbath, and an unceasing holy-day. One day in seven is well appointed by the Church, and hath been from the beginning kept, for the high ends of worship and rest and rejoicing; and so fasts, in their proper season, are well and wisely appointed: but let no one judge me in these respects; or yet judge himself, as if, in well and faithfully observing them, he had fulfilled the obligation of the Christian Sabbath; which is not one day in seven, but every day in the seven; for every day is the Lord's, and all time is alike holiness unto the Lord. And so also a Christian keepeth a continual fast; afflicting his soul for sin, and deprecating the holy indignation of God from the sinner; keeping his body under that he may not labour in vain, and ever submitting himself to the fiery trial with which it pleaseth the Lord to try him. This burden, I say—which standeth not in time and place, that it should be limited by them, but is the continual presentation of every member in holiness unto the Lord, through the operation in us of the Spirit of the risen Christ—this burden of good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them—this imitation of Christ in all His ways and in all His works,—is the chief part of the burden

referred to in the text, which He commandeth us to hold fast until He come.

This expression "till I come," marks a constancy and continuance and unchangeableness in the constitution of the Church, till the Lord shall come again in His glory and in His majesty; and puts to silence all claims of men to innovate, or alter in any essential matter the worship, doctrine, discipline, or government of the Christian Church. Come in what name they may, till Christ appear they come unsent of God, and can only be regarded as invaders of the rights of the Church, and intruders upon the prerogative of the Head of the Church. Ours it is to hold fast the Church as she was constituted on the day of Pentecost, and not to suffer her to be changed by the presumption of any man whatsoever. If any man, filled with the hope of the Lord's coming, shall therefore presume to set aside the ordinances of the Church as antiquated, and insist for something new, let him be anathema. Till Christ come, things must abide as they have been from the beginning, without any addition or alteration from the mind of man, or angel, or devil: and every form and ceremony, as hath been said, is only a mean for carrying the mind of Christ into effect; an expedient for the better execution of that which is old, not an addition of something new. And while we thus keep the integrity of the Church against all innovators, we must also guard it against all destroyers of its original beauty. And this leads us to ask, whether the Church be indeed held at present in that completeness in which we find her set forth at the day of Pentecost? for from that we may not deviate, either by addition or subtraction. This now is a grave inquiry, to which I am led, and indeed obliged, by the commandment of the Lord now under consideration, "Hold fast that which thou hast till I come."

DIGRESSION, TO DISCOVER WHAT THE CHURCH IS CHARGED TO HOLD FAST TILL CHRIST COME.

My idea of the Church is derived from its name, "The body of Christ;" and of its endowment from the words following, "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all," (Eph. i. 23.) It is one as much as the Spirit is one: "There is one body, and one Spirit," (Eph. iv. 4;) and as the body without the spirit is not the complete work of God, so neither is the spirit without the body. When Christ went unto the Father, He entered into the promise of the Holy Ghost, and, being seated on the Father's throne, began to act the Father's part, of governing the world. Since that time He hath been known as the Spirit, and not as the visible Christ. But a

spirit is not that which God appointed this world to be governed by. He made man to be His image and His king, and man is an embodied spirit. And when man became enslaved to Satan, God, keeping in His own hand the sovereignty, which had reverted to Himself through the disobedience of His vicegerent, did hold it, not in His character of a pure spirit, but did assume to Himself, in the Word, the parts, affections, properties, and attributes of a man, because as a man He was to redeem all, and to govern all. And, now that as a man He hath redeemed all, and is governing all, it were inconsistent with the great idea of the man, and not the spirit-governor, that Christ should now rule from His invisible throne in the spirit without a body. This body is the Church, of which He, Christ, is not only the Spirit, but likewise the Head. And the Church is united to Him, not only by having Him inspiring her, but likewise by being united with Him who is on the throne of God, being His instruments, His members for demonstrating before the world as much of that power and authority which He hath attained to, as is proper for this present state and condition of the world. This body, the Church, the Father giveth to Him. It is the Father's gift of an inheritance in the saints unto His Son Christ. It is the Father's bringing a spiritual seed out of Him. It is the Father's forming a wife out of Him. It is the Father's producing from Him a race of sons of God, in room of those who heretofore mixed themselves with the daughters of men, and forfeited their high estate. It is the Father's deriving from Christ the royal family of kings and priests by whom He is to govern the worlds. And the Church, thus constituted to be the body of Christ for ever, through whom unto eternity He may put forth the fulness of Godhead which is in Him, hath at present upon the earth the very same function to discharge; being unto Christ for a body wherein to abide, and whereby to act out before the world that office of a gracious Lord and holy Christ to which He hath been exalted by His resurrection from the dead. I say, the self-same office doth the Church now, and upon this earth, discharge, which she shall for ever and over all creation discharge; being the members of one Christ, united by one Spirit, and constituting one household, and following one invariable rule and principle of government, though consisting of many persons, divers memberships; and perhaps also to occupy, as they now do, various places in the one creation of God. Just as, to compare great things with small, our king, by his members, the ambassadors, governors, judges, lord-lieutenants, &c., doth exercise one government, with one law and principle, with one will and one mind, over the vast extent of his dominion; so our invisible King, the Lord Jesus Christ, doth at

present put forth, by means of His Church, that power and authority upon this earth which is proper now to be put forth. This is our idea of the Church; and we give it without hesitation as the true one set forth in the Scriptures.

The next question which ariseth is, Into what power hath Christ entered; and how much of that power is it His good pleasure to put forth upon this earth during this dispensation of His absence? With respect to the first part of the question, I answer in His own word, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Seated in God the Father's throne, He holdeth God the Father's sceptre, and exerciseth God the Father's dominion. He is now creation's God, as He was heretofore creation's surety and bondsman; He is now creation's sceptre-bearer, as He was heretofore creation's burden-bearer. Formerly He showed Himself the suffering, mortal man; now He shows Himself the ruling, life-quickening God. It is this accession of honour and of power, to which as Christ He passed, upon His leaving this world and going to the Father, that forms the ground of His consolation to His Church under the present dispensation of His absence. Therefore said He, it was expedient for them that He should go away, for otherwise the Comforter could not come; therefore said He, they should do greater works than He had done, because He went unto the Father. And, in short, the key to the whole of that consolatory discourse contained in the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th chapters of John, is this, that by being absent from the Church in the world and present with the Father, He should enter into the glory and the power which must ever abide with, and ever proceed from, the secret of the Father's dwelling-place; which to possess and to occupy, He must enter there, where creature never before did enter, and never shall enter again, and where He entered because He was Creator as well as creature. And this high reward of His faithfulness, and demonstration of His divinity, and re-possession of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, having received unto Himself, He would, to the extent this present world can bear, make manifest by means of those whom the Father had given Him out of the world to be one with Him, as He is one with the Father. With this comfort He comforteth His Church over His absence, and assureth them that He would send unto them the promise of the Father, even power from the Holy Ghost, when the Holy Ghost should have come upon them, (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4, 8.) That the Church was to be made sharers in some way of that accession of power and glory into which He was exalted, is the consolation with which He comforteth them, and for the which He desireth them to wait in

Jerusalem until they should receive power from on high. And as to the other part of this inquiry, to wit, How much of this His new dignity and power it is proper for Him to render, through the Church, visible unto the world, we are willing to be guided by the fact that it was communicated on the day of Pentecost, and by the testimonies as to what this was contained in the holy Scriptures. That gift of the Holy Ghost, which was then given, is the same unto which we are all baptized, (Acts ii. 38, 39,) and with the hope of which He comforteth His Church over His absence; which, therefore, is our comfort, and ought to be our possession. The question is, then, What was the gift of the Holy Ghost at that time communicated to the Church? for this is what we are commanded to hold fast till He come.

Was it the gift of perfect holiness in flesh? I answer, No: this we have in consequence of His life, and death, and resurrection; or, rather His life and death; for as to this, His resurrection did but seal what His life and death had purchased. That which was by His life and death accomplished is, the putting away of sin and death from mortal and corruptible flesh. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." So far, therefore, as perfect holiness is concerned, we have it in virtue of a work completed at the resurrection, not in virtue of the "promise of the Father," which He received after His resurrection. In order to become members of His body, we must believe upon His work of putting away sin from all flesh by His life and death: by which faith we enter into a holy subsistence in the holy flesh of Christ offered for us on the cross; and are no more in the flesh, but in the Spirit; and live no more after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This regeneration, this renewal after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, this dismissal (or, as our version lamely translates it, remission) of sins we are baptized into, and every baptized person is answerable for the same. But this is distinct from the gift of the Holy Ghost, into the promise of which we are also baptized; and not to be confused therewith, without confusing the work which Christ by the Spirit did in flesh wish that promise of the Holy Ghost into which He entered when He went out of the world unto the Father. There is a work which Christ did in the world; and there is, distinct from this, a glory and a power and a work, which it was put upon Him to enjoy and to execute when He went out of the world. We obtain the former by eating His flesh and blood, through faith, and thereby become members of His holy flesh, to do in flesh the work of holiness which He also did. The other we are thereby qualified to become sharers in, by being made members of His body; and in it

we share by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, shed down upon the Church on the day of Pentecost, to enable the Church to put forth of that fulness which is in her Head, so far forth as it is convenient and proper that the same should be put forth in this mortal state, before this sinful world. Perfect holiness is the inward law and condition of the Church, by which her union with her perfectly holy Head is preserved. Power in the Holy Ghost is her outward action, as the body of Christ, in the sight of the world; unto the manifestation of Christ's name by the Church, as He had manifested the Father's name; unto the proclamation of Christ's power, grace, and goodness unto the world, as He had proclaimed the Father's. Christ by His union with the Father, did, in the days of His flesh, proclaim the Father's glorious name and superabounding grace; with which the Father being satisfied, doth, for the time thence following, identify the name of Christ with His own, and constitute a Church in the world, which, by her union with Christ, shall be able to testify to the name and glory of Christ, who testifieth to the name and glory of the Father. Christ having been, and being, the Father's true and faithful witness, doth become the person witnessed of, and the Church are His witnesses; whom to witness, is to witness unto Him who witnesseth unto the Father. But in our witness we are able to go further than Christ went, for this reason: that in the days of His flesh the mortality of flesh, and sin in flesh, and the principalities and powers of darkness, therein holding their throne and revelry, were not yet conquered, condemned, and openly made a show of; the prison-house of the grave was not yet opened, nor its captivity was not yet led captive. The Captain of our salvation entered into a field wherein the legion of our enemies lay encamped in battle order; we enter into a field all strewn with the wrecks and spoils of their defeat. We are baptized into flesh redeemed, into a world disempowered, whose prince is judged and cast out. We come not to fight a battle, which is already fought, but to ride over the necks of a prostrate foe. They idly speak who say that He had not so many enemies as we, that He had not flesh to contend with. Oh, what an error! It is there we have the advantage of Him, and enter into the fruits of His victory. He wrestled with sin in the flesh, and condemned it utterly, dispossessed it, and cast it out: we enter into the fruits of His warfare, of His toil and sweat and blood. O ye thoughtless and ignorant men, (for ignorance is your only apology,) why will you go about to take away from Christ the glory and the greatness of His work! I am ashamed of you: I grieve that such things should be spoken in the bosom of my mother's family. They cannot long be spoken without calling down judg-

ment upon the house. Either the truth must be confessed, and the house saved, or it must be cast out, and the house destroyed. But, to return.

What portion of the power now possessed by Christ is proper to be put forth upon the earth during this season of Satan's presence therein, is still in question before us; though I hope, from what hath been said, it is no longer in question how that measure and portion of it shall be put forth. The body is the organ by which the spirit within a man doth manifest itself to the world; and the body of Christ, which is the Church, is the organ by which He, acting from the invisible seat of the Father by the invisible Spirit, must manifest Himself unto the world. There is no other medium of communication between Christ abiding with the Father, and the world, but the Church in the flesh: and herein the Church in the body hath a manifest importance, and I would say pre-eminence of usefulness, over the Church disembodied, in that she is the organ of communication between the invisible Christ and the visible world. This being fixed and settled, we now come to the nice inquiry, How much of that power, which Christ hath received, is it befitting to Him and the Father to put forth by the Church in this the day of His absence? And, first, it may be asked, Why not the whole? The answer is, That if the whole were put forth, the devil would be cast out, and all wicked men with him, and sin, and death, and all obstruction, and contradiction, and darkness, and dishonour, into the lake that burneth, there to consume for ever and ever; and there would be nothing to be done at His coming again. There is an economy in the putting forth of that power which resideth in the Father's throne; an economy which answereth to the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. Therefore it is, that in the writings of the apostles the gift of the Holy Ghost is spoken of only as a first-fruits of that which is yet to be received; and the full harvest is made to consist in the redemption of the body: as it is written, (Rom. viii. 23:) "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This passage instructeth me, that the gift of the Spirit by the Church, now possessed, is the first-fruits of that complete power of the Spirit which she shall possess when the body shall be redeemed from the corruption of the grave; and the context further instructeth me, that the whole creation is groaning, and travailing, and crying unto God, for a redemption which she shall receive at the same time from the bondage of corruption: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,

and not only they," &c. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." The Apostle Paul evidently saw the redemption of the bodies of the saints, and their manifestation as the sons of God, and with them the redemption of the whole creation from its present bondage, to be that complete harvest of the Spirit whereof the Church doth now possess only the first-fruits—that is, the first ripe grains which could be formed into a sheaf, and presented in the temple as a wave-offering unto the Lord. Most strikingly confirmatory of this is what he declareth concerning the same gift of the Spirit, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, (i. 13, 14:) "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." And likewise, in chap iv. of the same Epistle, he saith, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And the self-same language holdeth he twice over in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (i. 22:) "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," (ver. 5): "Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." In all these passages the gift of the Spirit which the Church had received, and was possessed of, is set forth as an earnest or pledge of what she is to receive and possess against that day, called The day of redemption, and The redemption of the inheritance. The inheritance is the earth and the inferior creation; not yet redeemed from the bondage of corruption, but to be redeemed, according to St Paul, in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God; in the day of the redemption of the body; in the day of the resurrection of the saints, in the day of the casting out of the devil and his works, in the day of the destruction of death, and the victory over the grave. The "earnest" (by which it is also named) is, like the first-fruits, only a part of that which is yet to be earned; and also, like them, of the same kind, but not in the same measure; a partial, not a complete thing—yea, but a small part of the whole, and yet sufficient surety that the whole shall, in the fulness of the times, be likewise ours. Wherefore, also, it is called the seal, being that mark which God affixeth upon His people, and by which He determineth that they are His.

Now if any one has been accustomed to interpret these passages of the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, he must, with all speed, disabuse himself of that error, which compromises a great point of personal holiness. For if the thing spoken of in these passages be regeneration and sanctification, then is that work of the Spirit only a partial and incomplete work, and we cannot

look for anything beyond a first-fruits of holiness, an earnest of holiness; which is to sanctify the imperfections and shortcomings of a believer, and to fix him in very partial holiness, and to take away from him both the hope and the desire of being holy as God is holy, and perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. No; we are baptized into perfect holiness, into the positive and absolute dismissal of all sin, into the burial of the flesh with its corruptions and lusts, the quickening of the spirit into all holiness. "The law of the spirit of life doth make us free from the law of death:" and every shortcoming from this perfect righteousness is a stain upon our white raiment, which must be instantly confessed and grieved over, and washed white in the blood of the Lamb: it cannot be tolerated, it cannot be indulged, it cannot be sanctioned from Scripture; it ought not to exist within the Church; it is an offence to God, a disgrace to the body of Christ, and cannot be justified by any means. Those passages of Scripture, therefore, which speak of a gift of the Spirit which is only first-fruits of something greater and better, cannot, must not, be referred to regeneration and sanctification, but to that power of government and authority entered into by Christ when He passed out of the world unto the Father; whereof it is expedient and economical that a part only should be possessed and exhibited by the Church during this our mortal estate. It is, moreover, manifest that these passages have nothing to do with the cleansing of the conscience from dead works, which proceeds from the blood of Christ," (Heb. xiii.;) and the answer of a good conscience, which proceeds from baptism, (1 Peter:) not only because these are complete works, and not first-fruits and earnests, but also because the work spoken of is connected with the redemption of the inheritance, with the deliverance of the creation, with which the work in the conscience hath nothing to do. The work of soul-cleansing, which regeneration is, is wholly spiritual, and not part or parcel of the work of redeeming the body and the inheritance, which is wholly natural or physical. The creation natural or physical was finished when the body of man was created out of the dust of the earth: the creation spiritual began when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. In the redemption, or regeneration, the thing is reversed. First the soul within is cleansed, whereby Christ proveth Himself to have been the Creator of the invisible spirit, Him who breathed it into man; and the spirit of man, thus redeemed and regenerated by its Creator, is left alone in the midst of an unredeemed and unregenerated world, to show its separateness therefrom, and superiority thereto, by triumphing over all creation's evil propensities, and enforcing all creation, with the-

body which commands it, to do homage unto Christ its King and Lord. And to make it the more manifest that this period between the regeneration and the redemption of the body is the period for testifying the supremacy of spirit over nature, of soul over body and bodily dependencies, not only is the body and the world its servant, left under the law of corruption and death, and yet made obedient unto the law of holiness and life; but also the person of Christ, by whose power alone this supremacy of the regenerate soul is maintained, is taken out of the world, and the communication between Him and our souls is carried on, not through sense, but through faith, not by vision, but by the invisible Spirit. So that, ever since the departure of Christ out of the world unto the Father, it hath been a season and a time for making apparent, and putting beyond doubt, the truth, that Christ was the Father of the living soul; that He is the Redeemer of it; and that, through faith and union with Him, living souls can and will govern the corporeal world. In one word, during the absence of Christ there have been regenerate souls and an unregenerate world, and these regenerate souls have performed the will of God in despite of unregenerate bodies and an unregenerate world. This, now, is the mystery of the regeneration of the soul, which, as we have said, is not part and parcel of the body and world to be regenerate, but is the opposite thereof; and therefore I conclude, with a certainty which they only who understand doctrine can feel, that those passages, in which the gift of the Holy Ghost is set forth as an earnest of the redemption of the world, cannot have any reference whatever to the regeneration of the soul, or cleansing of the conscience, or renewal of the spirit, which we are baptized into.

These thoughts may be judged more deep than pertinent to the subject in hand. They are indeed very deep, and I devoutly praise God for having been able to express what I have long brooded in my mind: but they are likewise very pertinent, and yield a complete solution of the question in hand. For, seeing that the thing which is now proceeding, according to the economy of the divine purpose, is the manifestation of a renewed spirit's power to do God's will, despite of a rebel flesh and world; and to testify the power which Christ, by means of the reasonable soul, shall yet exercise over the world, to quicken the dust of corrupted bodies, to renew the decayed face of the earth, and to cast forth of the world's verge the recreant spirits of darkness, with their retinue of wicked men; and seeing that, while we have the completeness of the former, we have only the first-fruits of the latter; we ought now to find in the renewed spirits of men a power and faculty to exhibit in the body

and upon the body, in the world and upon the world, such actings of Christ as shall not only foreshow, but really be, a first-fruits and earnest of that perfect and complete acting in which He is to go forth when He comes to redeem the body and to redeem the inheritance. —If, now, you ask me to come to closer quarters, and tell you distinctly what these actings be, I accept the challenge most willingly, and proceed to show you them, first, in promise from the mouth of the Lord; and, secondly, in existence in the Church.

1. This power is contained in promise in many parts of Scripture: as in Isaiah viii. 18, where Christ declareth of Himself and His children by regeneration, that they are for signs and for wonders; and in the prophecy of Joel, which hath reference to that fulness of which we have received, and do enjoy, only the first-fruits; and twice by the Lord—in these words, "If your faith were as a grain of mustard-seed, ye would say unto this mountain, Remove, and be cast into the depths of the sea, and it would be done unto you;" and again in that strong asseveration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father," (John xiv. 12.) But it is most fully developed in the last verses of the Gospel by Mark, from which I prefer to set forth the endowment in promise. The last six verses of that chapter contain the substance of the Church's commission, given to her in the persons of the eleven apostles, commanding them to go and preach the gospel of the kingdom to every creature under heaven, with the assurance that "whosoever believed it, and was baptized, should be saved; whosoever believed it not, should be damned." Then addeth He these words, "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) These words being spoken, it is said that "He was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God; and that they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord confirming the word with signs following." Now, then, it is to these signs that I would direct your attention, as containing the particulars of that gift of power which was superadded to the work of complete regeneration sealed up to the believer in baptism. They consist of five particulars:—First, the casting out of devils. This is a first-fruits of that casting out of Satan and his angels into the bottomless pit, to be reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day, which shall be accomplished at the redemption of the body and the inheritance. And because Satan is the author and continuer

of the bondage from which Christ came to redeem, whose works Christ was manifested to destroy, the Church, in order to possess and show forth unto the world what Christ will yet do by that devil whose thrall the world is, hath given to her power in the Spirit to cast out devils from the bodies of men; and thus doth she rebuke the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged; and she shows that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto men, when their children are able to cast the devils out. Christ's supremacy in the spiritual world, the completeness of His redemption, is continually declared by this power in the Church to cast out devils; and a testimony is continually kept up for the truth, against the continual lie of Satan and the world, that he is its prince, and that all its kingdoms are his. No, says the Church; Christ is the King, and in His name I cast Satan and his tribes out of the bodies of men.

The second of those particulars embodied in the gift of the Holy Ghost is, that they should "speak with new tongues;" which had been prophesied of by Isaiah, (xxviii. 11,) and was given on the day of Pentecost. Now this is the demonstration that Christ is the Lord of human spirits, as the former is the demonstration of His being Lord over evil spirits. For to use my tongue is the prerogative of my soul; no other human person but myself can use it; if, therefore, it be used in such a manner as I cannot—for example, to speak a tongue which I do not understand, and in that tongue to utter reasonable speech—then is it true that another holdeth the mastery over me. Who that other is, must be determined by the thing which is spoken: for devils, we know, did use the tongues of men to utter things which they themselves knew not, and could not know; confessing Jesus to be the Christ, and the Holy One of God. And, therefore, in order to determine and try the spirit which spoke, certain tests were given, of which these two are the chief—to wit, whether their words bore testimony of the true flesh and to the real lordship of Christ. This being ascertained, then the spirit which possessed the man, and used His tongue, is known to be the Spirit of God; which is distributed through the body by Christ, the Head of the body; who therefore is proved to be Lord of human reason, Inhabiter of the souls of men, not by a figure, but in very truth, when forth from the souls of men He speaketh the glorious things of God in words which they understand not, and of which they must receive the interpretation at another time, or from another person, certainly by another act of the Spirit of Christ. The presence of Christ in the souls of His people; His power to actuate their will, and to use their tongue, and by it to express the forms of reasonable truth, while they themselves are all passive in His hands, as

the trumpet in the hand of the priest; doth clearly demonstrate Him to be the Lord of the souls of men, and able to use their tongues as hereafter He will do, in giving forth His word unto all the regions of creation. It is a first-fruits of that power which shall be hereafter, inasmuch as, though it be uttered to all the nations of the earth, it is not by them obeyed; whereas, in the time to come, in the eternal age, through them, even through the members of His Church, He shall speak to all regions of the world, and it shall be done. The former proveth Him to be the Lord of evil spirits, to cast them out of men; this proveth Him to be the Lord of human spirits, to fill them with the wisdom and the power of God; and these two together do leave mankind without excuse; for what doth man want, but a Redeemer who is able to cast the devil out and to bring God into Him again? There are many other things connected with the gift of tongues, into which we cannot enter in this place; but that which we have stated is, we believe, the substance of it considered as a sign.

Now the third particular brings us at once out of the spiritual into the material world: "They shall take up serpents." It was said of the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman;" and between serpents and mankind there is a deadly enmity, insomuch that the poison of serpents will not only almost instantaneously destroy life, but reduce the body to corruption: and therefore in this place it is put forth as the representative of that enmity which is come between man and the lower creatures, which were made to reverence, to serve, and not to destroy him. Now to this curse of rebelliousness the creatures were made subject not willingly; it is not their nature by creation, but it is the cruel sign of their stern bondage to the enemy of man. By receiving power from the Holy Ghost, therefore, to take up serpents, it is signified that Christ hath redeemed the lower creatures also from their bondage; and restored man to that supremacy over the animals, and the animals to that innocent obedience of man, with, and for which, man and they were created. The Church, therefore, by possessing this power to take up serpents, gives a manifest sign unto the world that a time is surely to come when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them: and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den," (Isa. xi. 6–8.) The Church, by possessing this power, hath in her hand the earnest and first-fruits

of that power "over the sheep and oxen and beasts, over the fowl of the air, and fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea," which Christ hath purchased for Himself, and possesseth in full right as Lord of all; which, however, it suiteth not the economy of the Father's times that He should take upon Him at present, but of which He giveth to the Church an earnest, and by her giveth to the world a sign, that He will in the fulness of the time take unto Himself.

But beside the animal creation, which was originally subject unto man, and is now subject unto him again in the person of Christ Jesus, there is the inanimate or elemental creation also, which hath escaped from its subserviency, and become enslaved unto evil. The poisons which the earth produceth, the noxious vapours exhaled from the waters, and the deadly infections which the air scattereth abroad, the storms and tempests which devastate the face of the world—these, and all other violences, are the signs of that bondage into which sin hath brought all things, and out of which Christ by His righteousness hath redeemed all things. And when the fulness of the time is come for Him to appear again, He shall come as the Liberator of all nature from her thraldom. If now, Christ have in hand power to redeem all nature out of the bonds of evil, and the Church have in the Holy Ghost a first-fruits thereof, she must possess the power of miracles, to arrest the evil course of things, and to turn them into that righteous course which they shall observe for ever; power she ought to possess over the laws of the world, such as was possessed by our Lord when He stilled the raging winds and calmed the tempestuous deep. And forasmuch as poisons are the most pregnant evidences of the evil condition of nature, Christ, by giving to him that believeth power over the same to suspend their evil effects, doth thereby give unto His Church the best first-fruits of that power which he now possesseth, and she shall hereafter possess,—the power to press out from every plant, and from every element of nature, the various principles of death and destructiveness. For which reason it is, that in the Scriptures all nature is represented as rejoicing in the prospect of the Lord's coming; as for example: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth," (Ps. xcvi.)

By the last two particulars are established the supremacy of man's body over all nature, and the ministry of all nature to its health and well-being, as parts of the redemption which Christ hath wrought out

for those that believe ; and by the two former, the supremacy of man's soul over the devils, and its subjection to God through the Holy Spirit, are likewise shown to be of that redemption purchased by Christ ; but there still remaineth one part of creation—to wit, man's body—over which, by these signs, the redemption of Christ should be shown to extend ; and this we have as the last particular : "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Sickness is sin apparent in the body, the presentiment of death, the forerunner of corruption. Disease of every kind is mortality begun. Now, as Christ came to destroy death, and will yet redeem the body from the bondage of corruption, if the Church is to have a first-fruits or earnest of this power, it must be by receiving power over diseases, which are the first-fruits and earnest of death ; and this being given to her, completes the circle of her power. For in creation there is no more than these five parts ; the pure spirit, the embodied soul of man, the body of man, the animal creation, and the inanimate world : of all which sin hath taken possession, and over all which Christ hath obtained superiority, to re-constitute them in that way which shall for ever demonstrate the being and attributes of God. This superiority, this ownership, He now inheriteth in sole right and possession ; but, evermore willing to show forth His dutifulness to His Father, not less on heaven's throne than in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, He doth wait upon the Father's will to determine the time when the day of complete redemption shall at length arrive ; and the Father, in order to gratify the Son, and make known His surpassing goodness and the riches of His glory, doth beget unto Him, out of sinful flesh, a body, the Church, unto whom He may communicate His fulness, and by whom He may express it unto all creation ; ruling and governing, by these His kings and priests, those innumerable worlds which He hath purchased with His blood, (for the heavenly things, as well as the earthly things, were purified by His blood :) and meanwhile, until the day of the refreshing, until the restitution of all things cometh, He doth, by means of this Church, which the Father hath given to Him for a body, and which He hath informed with His own Spirit, communicate a first-fruits and earnest of that power which He is hereafter by their means to express in its fulness, and to hold for ever. And this He doth to the end that devils, and devil-possessed men, may know the certainty of that doom which abideth them, and that the latter may cast in their lot with the righteous and be saved ; while to the bodies of men and to all inferior creation, He doth make sure that redemption from the grave and from the curse which they shall surely obtain. This first-fruits of power, to cast the devils into hell, to raise the bodies of the dead, and to hold

the superiority of all inferior creation, being possessed by the believing Church, doth continually demonstrate and signify unto the world who, and of what kind, their Redeemer is; who, and of what kind, is that man, Jesus of Nazareth, whom God hath constituted both Christ and Lord. This first-fruits and earnest of the inheritance of power and prerogative, which under Him we are yet to hold, is likewise the Church's argument to men of their certain destruction, if they come not forth from the world; of their superlative dignity and honour, if they do come forth from it into the bosom of the Church. It is a sign of that which we preach Christ to be,—Lord of all. It is a sign of that which we preach Him as about to do,—to cast out devils, to raise the dead, and to liberate the creature. It is a sign of what we, the Church, are, in real uninterrupted union with Him, holding a real power under Him,—the arm of His strength, the temple of His presence, the tongue of His Spirit, the manifoldness of His wisdom, the kings and the priests of Christ for God.

This, now, is an exhibition of the length and breadth of that gift of the Holy Ghost which the Church hath, in earnest of that fulness of Him that filleth all in all; which is her prerogative; for which in the fulness of time she waits; holding it now in faith, then to have it in possession. Our evidence-writers have never comprehended the depths of this subject: their books are mere rag-rolls, fragments, and tatters of the substantial doctrine: no Christian writings, but metaphysical or antiquarian researches. These miracles they make to stand merely in their power: and so, say they, they demonstrate God to be with the worker of them; and if so, then are they signs that he is sent by God, and ought with prostration of mind to be listened to. Now, be this granted, and what to do hath it with Christ? It were an argument for a heathen as good as for a Christian. It is merely an argument that the God of nature is with this man; there is no recognition of Christ as the doer of the work; there is no recognition of the work itself being part and parcel of Christ's redemption. Indeed, the substance or nature of the work is never once considered by these evidence-writers. But, besides the leanness and emptiness of their speculation, I deny both the premises and the conclusion. First, the premises, that a mere miracle demonstrates God to be the worker. Miracles have been done by the power of Satan and Beelzebub; and more are promised to be done; and no man can tell what power beyond man's science the spirits of darkness possess. It is not the powerfulness, but the moral character of the miracle, that proves it to be divine. Is it in the way of evil or of good? in the way of redemption or of bondage? is it in furtherance or hindrance of Satan's kingdom? The miracle

appeals to the moral part of man; to the conscience, and not to his power.—Next, I deny their conclusion. Men may do miracles in the name of Christ, and yet be wicked men: as our Lord himself declares, that many shall say in that day, Have we not in Thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works? of whom He shall profess that He never knew them. A man may possess the powers of the world to come, and yet fall away into evil courses (Heb. vi.) Wherefore I say, that the circumstance of a man's doing miracles, or having done miracles, doth not seal up every word he speaketh as truth, even though these miracles be done in the name of Christ, and by the power of God. The word He speaks appealeth to the conscience of man; and God did never intend that man in hearing His word should be less than man, a being responsible, and conscious of moral truth.—But my present occupation is not to reprove the modern evidence-writers; whom I would not have noticed in this place, had it not been to show the true origin of that most erroneous opinion of these latter times, and of this Protestant section of the Church, that these gifts of the Holy Ghost were intended only for a season, until the canon of Scripture was completed, and the Book had found a place and an authority amongst men. The whole of this idea is a tissue of error and contradiction, which it is not my present business to expose. Yet from this account, meagre and false as it is, of the "signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost," hath sprung the diabolical hatred with which the Christian *sçavans*—for I cannot call them divines—are filled upon the very mention of the existence of these gifts in the Church. They are like men demented, given over, and toppling to their downfall. The way in which the idea has been scouted and hooted at, by what are called divines, (but if they would retain the name much longer, they must make it good by other means than scandalous abuse and mocking raillery,) is to me the fearfullest sign of the Protestant Church, and especially of the evangelical set in the bosom of it. But to return from this digression.

II. Having set out the largeness and the particularity of the gift or power which the Church hath given to her, in earnest of her full inheritance, and that she may serve for a witness of that which she preacheth concerning the present lordship and future action of Christ; we now come to take a view of the same thing, not as it lies in promise, but as it is in real existence and was in active exertion in the Church. And to the intent that we may here, as always, have under our feet the firm continent of the Word of God, and not sail widely in the waste of fanciful speculations or scholastic inventions, we be-

take ourselves to the 12th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, to see there the form and function of the Christian Church, in that state in which Jesus did constitute it, and in which he requireth us to hold it fast till He come. The apostle, speaking of the state of the Church at Corinth, and taking in hand to order it aright, and so to leave upon the record of Scripture the scheme of a rightly-constituted Church; and having already discoursed of the true foundation of Christ and Him crucified, and of holy discipline, and of separateness from idolatry and fornication, and of the right administration of the Lord's Supper: doth in this chapter take up the subject of spiritual gifts, or gifts of the Spirit, in contradistinction from charity, which is the more excellent way, and the bond of perfectness, that spirit of complete holiness into which we are baptized. And concerning these he first asserteth three things in general, to point out the several parts which the several persons in the Godhead had therein. And, first, he asserteth that the diversities of gifts which were dispersed throughout the members of the Church, like the diversity of members in the body, did not prove that there were many spirits, but that there was one Spirit, the one life of the whole, and dividing unto every one according as He will; that no one member possessed the whole power of the Spirit, but only a part thereof, and craved as much the help and ministry of every other part as they in their turn did crave of it; Christ alone having the seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God. And therefore it is observed by the apostle, secondly, that there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord; that is to say, in other words, various persons into whose hands the adminstration of these gifts was committed, and who were responsible for the use of them in behalf of the whole body and of the world without; according as it is written in the 12th chapter of the Romans: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." The third observation in general is, that as the substance of all the gifts is the one Spirit, and the adminstrator of them all the one Lord; so the in-worker of the gifts in all the persons is the one and the same God, whose Godhead the Son is filled with in His human nature to serve out to men, while the Holy Ghost carrieth on and supplieth the service. So that verily these gifts, ministries, and operations are God working by means of men what His good pleasure is; even as the apostle declareth in the First

Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. xiv. ver. 24, 25: "But if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." These three observations the apostle makes, to prevent the diversity of the gifts and the ministries and the operations from leading to schism, instead of preserving unity, as their intention is; his object being the same as is expressed more fully in the 4th chapter of the Ephesians, from the 3d to the 17th verse, where the unity standeth in these particulars, "one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,"—a sevenfold and perfect unity. These three observations are of great price, as teaching us that the Church, under Christ its Head, and with the Spirit for its inspiration, is the one great instrument of God in which and by which to carry on all His operations; a temple for the Eternal God to dwell in; a sufficient body for expressing all His mind, and doing all His will. This is a very great, and almost an inexpressible idea; but it is the only adequate idea of the Church, considered, not in relation to Christ, but considered in relation to the incomprehensible God. In relation to Christ, it is as the body to the Head; but in relation to God, it is as the whole body under its Head to the Will. And herein lies the necessity that the Head of this body should Himself be adequate to the comprehension of God, filling His bosom; otherwise there were no understanding how a finite thing could keep up communication and sympathy, proportion and measure, with what is infinite. The whole mystery of redemption is God's obtaining for Himself such a complete organ of expression and of action, in the finiteness of which the attributes of His own infinite being might be truly and fully expressed. To procure for Godhead such a fit organ, the Son and the Holy Ghost do, without departing or separating from the Godhead, which is impossible, take connexion with the creature, and from a portion thereof do constitute that most seemly and adequate Shechinah of the Eternal God. This portion of the creation is the election; and the Shechinah, or glorious habitation thus constructed, is the Church; and the Head of it, or holder of it up, is Christ; and the Life of it, or the holder of it together, is the Holy Ghost. And the materials, thus headed up and holden together for a dwelling-place, and, so to speak, embodiment of God, are all of the fallen creation; of the creation after it hath proved that in itself is neither strength nor aptitude; of the creation dissolved and dead; to prove that it needed both a Super-creation Head and Life, Holder-up and Holder-together.

Ah me! what a contemplation it is!—But we must again betake ourselves to the details.

This being the true idea of the Church, God-ward considered, it must needs be that from the beginning of its being it should put forth the germ of its own perfection; like all the inferior works of God, that this, His chief work, should reveal its constant law, and begin to be in growth. Now the Church began to be from the time that Christ was glorified and became the quickening Spirit. As the human race began to be from the time Adam was endowed with the power of generation and received command to multiply; so the Church began to be from the time that the Second Adam was perfected, and, by receiving from the Father the Holy Ghost, had power by regeneration to beget sons of God—that is, from the day of Pentecost—and therefore from this time it should begin to show forth the information and inworking of God within it. How it did so, let us now show out, by pursuing this 12th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and so discover what that is which we are commanded to hold fast till He come.

The gifts which the apostle now proceeds to enumerate as possessed by the Church, are in general called "the manifestation of the Spirit,"—that is, the way which the Spirit takes to manifest or show Himself; to make Himself evident to others, to any one who may chance to enter the assembly, and hear and see the things which are said and done. This answers to our first idea, that the Church is to Christ, while He acteth in the Spirit, what the body is to the soul—an instrument by which it reveals both its presence and its manifold dispositions and energies: "That by the Church may be made known to the powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God." And these manifestations of the Spirit, saith He, "are given to every one to profit withal," or for profitable use; not to be hid in a napkin, or buried in the earth, but to be turned to account and used for the common behoof: as it is written by Peter concerning the same subject; "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen," (1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.) Now to execute and fulfil this purpose the constant presence of charity is necessary; otherwise the precious talent rusts and corrodes its own possessor. In order that these gifts may be graces, the work of the regeneration is absolutely necessary—holiness and charity—to bring us into the same devoted-

ness to God and man in which Christ was, and to keep us ever so. For want of this it is that many possessing these gifts fall into schism, and some into total apostasy. They are not the best thing, but they are something, and that no mean thing, if to exhibit God and Christ and the Spirit to the world, and to edify the Church, be no mean thing.

Then comes the enumeration of these gifts waited upon by divers ministers; whereof the first two stand in word; the one the "word of wisdom," the other the "word of knowledge;" whereof the former refers to mysteries of doctrine which needed exposition; the latter to events, whether past, present, or to come. I gather from the 2d verse of the 13th chapter, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge," that the word of wisdom hath regard to mysteries; and from the 8th verse, that the word of knowledge hath respect to events of this imperfect state and temporary dispensation, which shall be done away. The two occur in combination, (Rom. xi. 33,) where the apostle, carrying his thoughts to the consummation of God's purpose, bursts out into ecstasy over the wisdom of the method and the knowledge of the end: "Oh the depths both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" The word of knowledge is, when applied to the past, *learning;* when applied to the present, knowledge; when applied to the future, fore-knowledge: and it lays out the particulars of which wisdom discovers the divine unity, the wonderful arrangement, the relations of part to part, and their application to the well-being of the soul, and to the moral duties of life. The one tells the tale, the other adds the moral. The Church of Scotland hath made both these standing ordinances to this day; she hath held these fast; requiring that in every flock there be one at least with the word of wisdom, endowed of the Spirit, whose name is the bishop, or pastor, or minister, and his office to apply the truth wisely to the conscience of the people and the exigencies of life; another with the word of knowledge, whose name is the doctor, or teacher, and his business to lay out the history and grounds of truth and error, and to handle them doctrinally, but not to apply them. Of these the latter is considered as the lower degree. I think this distinction is substantially correct, and that the division of office and of gift is a fine relict of the primitive churches: would that the rest had been as carefully preserved! I have often admired the steadiness with which the Scottish people have ever insisted that these gifts of the preacher and the teacher should stand in "word," as they are given in the passage before us, and not in written and studied compositions; insisting that it is of the essence of the minister's office that he should receive both the matter and the word from the Holy Ghost. There

fore the apostle says, that he taught wisdom not "in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." For, according to the text, there is in the Church a gift "to speak wisdom," and another gift "to speak knowledge;" and of the nine gifts, only these two have the character of "word:" and we may therefore well believe that this is of their essence; that "the word" is a part of the gift, and that those who hold for a verbal inspiration of the matter of Scripture are correct. These two gifts are, however, not the only ones which stood in utterance by the mouth, which belongeth also "to prophecy." But there is this difference, as I judge; that the prophet had not the word given to him, but only the matter, with the high gift of embodying it in the form known by the name prophecy, which we shall hereafter consider; whereas the other two had the matter brought to them in the form of word, and were only the mouth to give it utterance. By these Christ showed forth His wisdom to unlock all mysteries, and His knowledge of all events; and His capacity of embodying them by the word of others, from whom He was separated personally by being altogether out of the world: showing to us the power of the Spirit to bring THE WORD from the Father, and utter it in the world by means of men; and teaching how, in the age to come, He will use men for the conveyancers of His Word—or, rather, the Spirit for the conveyancer, and men for the utterers of it, in whatever region of the world their appointed station may be. No doubt it was this gift which furnished and fitted the evangelists and the apostles for their work of inditing the Scriptures; the former having the word of knowledge, to recall and narrate events; the latter the word of wisdom, to decide questions which had arisen in the Church, and give full counsels for all cases that should arise.

Next to these is faith: "To another faith, by the same Spirit." This is not saving faith, or the "one faith," without which a man cannot be saved; which is not a particular gift conferred upon one and not upon another member of the body, but the common possession of them all; and is of that complete, and not partial, gift into which we are baptized, and by which we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lord in the Eucharist. Of what kind this faith is, we have described to us in the 13th chapter, by direct contrast with that charity which is not partial, but common; which is not accidental, but essential to a Christian. When I say accidental, I would not have it to be understood as if I regarded the possession of these spiritual gifts as matter of indifference to the Church whether she have them or not; for I believe them to be her talents to trade upon, her setting-up and outfit in the present world, for probation of her

faithfulness and adjudication of her future reward. The parable of the talents has these gifts, as I judge, in view. It is not natural gifts, but spiritual gifts of the kingdom, which are there treated of. When therefore it so happens, as at this time amongst us Protestants, that the Church not only doth not desire to possess, but doth utterly abjure their being responsible for, these gifts, she doth worse than the man with the one talent, and shall receive her reward, if she repent not, and give not heed to the witness which is now raised in her ears concerning her endowments. The faith here spoken of, and which I call accidental and peculiar, not spiritual and catholic, because one Christian may have it and another may not have it, is the same spoken of in chap. xiii. 2: "And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains." And this, again, carries us, as by a direct quotation, to our Lord's declaration to His disciples, twice repeated—once upon the occasion of His healing the devil-possessed child, (Matt. xvii. 20,) the other of His cursing the barren fig-tree, (Matt. xxi. 21,)—"If ye have faith like a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." This is what divines call the faith of miracles, as distinguished from saving faith. And yet it is not the gift of miracles, which may be divided from it, and is divided from it in the text, and given to another. What, then, is it? I think it is that which hath the same relation to the actions of the Spirit, that word hath to His thoughts: it is the strong confidence in Christ's power, in the presence of which power it is done, and without which it cannot be done. But, while this gift of faith is the substratum upon which the various actings of power that follow do rest, it hath doubtless something in itself distinctive enough to form a gift, without any addition of healing, or miracles, or tongues; which appears to be, the power of relying upon the word which hath been spoken out of the gift of wisdom and of knowledge. To utter a word is not to believe: when a man hath been the tongue of the Spirit, he hath done his part; it is the part of another to fasten hold upon it, and to keep it laid up in his faith and to be established upon it, and to be the stay of the Church in adversities. As the man with the word of wisdom rises up in perplexities, and gives forth the resolution of God; so the man with faith rises up in adversities, and recalls the memory and reawakens the faith of things uttered by God. These men of faith are the forlorn hope of the army, who never lose heart, but believe all things possible to God. Such men I know, who cannot utter a syllable without a stammering lip, but have tenfold the faith of others, who can speak like the oracles of God. This gift of faith I

look upon as being in the Church what indomitable resolution and never-failing confidence is in the natural character of some men: it sticks at nothing which God hath said, but believes its very jots and tittles; it fears nothing which God in His providence sends, but ever says to the children of Israel, Go forward. By having such an organ of the Spirit in the body, Christ shows that His Church hath capacity of believing all that He can say, and therefore is a fit instrument for executing all that He can desire. The order of God's providence is, first, word; then, faith in him who hears it; then, execution by the means of them who have believed. And while it stands lingering in the stage of faith, the Lord bringeth the most faith-trying occurrences, so that it should seem to some utterly impossible to accomplish the thing; and He ever saith, "Except ye believe, ye cannot be established:" faith bears the fiery proof, and in due time receives the reward of accomplishment. To this intrepidity of faith, God calleth some with a special calling.

The next is "the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit." Of this we have already spoken, when viewing this subject under the aspect of promise. It is the fifth of the signs of the Redeemer and the complete redemption: "Ye shall lay your hands on the sick, and they shall recover." And certain persons in the Church were entrusted with the dispensation thereof unto the whole body, and unto those that were without: for these gifts were not to be hoarded up within the Church, but to be traded with; they were for the confirmation of that word to every creature under heaven, to whom the word was preached, not by an appeal to a miracle—which is, in respect of truth, no more discernment than the appeal to arms is in respect of justice—but by a demonstration in the act of that thing which they preached in word. The word preached is, that Christ hath redeemed men from the power of death; and in sign thereof we do in His name heal all manner of diseases, and upon occasion raise the dead, (as is recorded both of Peter and Paul:) and the conclusion is, that the name of Christ is indeed able to effect those things preached. The sign is part and parcel of the thing preached, and by being so confirms it. It is not an appeal to blind power, but it is an appeal to Jesus to confirm the truth preached, by giving a sign of His possessing this power which we assign to Him, and a first-fruits of that action which we preach Him about to perform. It is not by the transmission of this through eighteen centuries of tradition, that the unlearned world are to be convinced—a process by which, I will venture to say, that none but a few antiquaries were ever convinced;—but it is by the abiding of them in, and the putting of them forth by, the Church, wherever and so long as she

is established, until Christ come, that the world is to be taught that Jesus of Nazareth is the world's gracious Healer, and wise Teacher, and merciful Redeemer, and righteous Governor. It is not by putting a book into every man's hand, of the genuineness and authenticity of which it takes no mean store of learning to be convinced, but it is by a continuous Church holding forth the word of the gospel of life to the nations, and attesting the truth of what they declare concerning Jesus, by calling His name over all distressed nature, and giving it redemption and joy. This is what the Church was intended to be, God's witnesses of Christ to every nation and every generation, until He should send Him to accomplish all which had been preached for a witness. But now, lo! the Bible Society is our Church, and the Bible is our God!—These gifts of healing bespeak Christ's mercy unto and His power over all flesh. How oft is it said in the gospels, "And He healed them all!" And Peter and Paul had a still more indiscriminate ministry; for to them were brought handkerchiefs from the sick, that they might touch them; and the infirm were laid by the way that the shadow of the apostle might overshadow some of them. That dispensation of a redeeming providence which Judea had for three years and a-half in the person of the Lord, the whole world was intended to have in the Church; and would have had, but for our unfaithfulness to our Master, our self-sufficiency in ourselves, and our unmercifulness to the world. Forgetting for what end we were elected, even to shew forth the power of Him who hath called us, we grew vain of our election, and rioted in the pride of it, and became hardhearted; and did such things and held such opinions, under the covert of that name Election, as many are now doing who deny the universal love of God, and the real work of Christ, to condemn sin in the flesh. We are acting over again the shameful history of the children of Israel, and are preparing for a more terrible tragedy than theirs.

Next comes "the working of miracles." The passage in Hebrews, (ii. 4,) which gives a brief enumeration of these works, divides them thus: "Signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts (distributions) of the Holy Ghost." Of these four, the third is that now under consideration. The first, "signs," we have treated of in the foregoing exposition of the last verses of Mark, "These signs shall follow them that believe." A sign is properly a token in which the thing signified can be recognised; and in those four particulars we showed is to be recognised the whole salvation of soul, body, and inheritance, which we preach. The "wonders" are almost constantly coupled with the signs, and in one place distinguished from them: (Acts ii. 19) "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs

in the earth beneath." And sometimes "miracles," or powers, are added to both; as in recounting the proof of Christ's mission in the same chapter, and Paul's justifying his own mission, 2 Cor. xii. 12. It is hard to distinguish these things, and I know not whether it can be done. Our translators have not done it, and perhaps they are right. If, however, I were to venture a distinction, it would be, that the wonder is something extraordinary exhibited to the sight—as the turning of the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood; the rending of the veil of the temple, and of the rocks, and the bringing on of darkness;—and the miracle, or power, is the doing of something mighty beyond all comparison; as the calming of the storm, or the laying of the deep, or the multiplying of loaves, or the changing of water into wine: although both of these are called signs in the original, as is also the healing of the lame man by Peter and John; but throughout all that discourse in the 11th chapter of Matthew, for reproof of the cities where His mighty works had been chiefly done, the word used is "powers, or miracles." Wonders I take to be remarkable occurrences which yet contradict no law of nature, as Elisha's bringing fire from heaven; but miracles are a strong resistance, suspension, and turning back of nature's fixed powers. Yet all of these, both the wonders and miracles, being interpreted aright, are signs of that kingdom of heaven which we preach as about to be revealed under the government of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Besides these three, there is a fourth classification in this passage of the Hebrews, which is entitled "gifts (or distributions) of the Holy Ghost." And the like addition do we find the apostle Paul making, when enumerating the works of God in and by him. The passage is in Rom. xv. 19, and somewhat obscured in our translation; literally it is, "In power of signs and wonders, in power of the Spirit of God;" another form of power. Accordingly, we find that those same apostles who were required to wait for the day of Pentecost, in order to receive "power from on high," had at that time, and during their ministry, possessed power to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to trample upon all the power of the enemy: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." This they possessed, and yet did they not possess that power or gift of the Holy Ghost which they received on Pentecost. They then did such works as He did, but they were after Pentecost to do greater works than these, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, which He was to receive by going to the Father and to shed down upon them. To this new power, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the apostle's fourth distribution in the 2nd of the Hebrews, and second in the 15th of the Romans, hath reference. Our inquiry at present,

however, is into the gift of miracles, which was a manifestation of the Spirit given to a certain order in the Church. This order was instituted in the body on purpose to set forth Christ's mighty power to withstand, to turn again, and to direct for the ends of grace and goodness those potent springs of nature, those powers of the heavens and the earth, which Satan hath succeeded in distorting from their true and right intention to an evil use: where famine is, to make plenty; where blindness is, to give sight; and lameness strength, and death life: that men might know that cause and effect is only an appointment or permission of God while it pleases Him; and that the laws of the material world are not necessary, but under the control and in the hands of our merciful Redeemer. If the Church had been still possessed of this memorial and foreshowing of that great revolution in nature which is to be effected at the coming of the Lord, there would not have been this universal feeling and outcry, "All things have continued as they were since the beginning:" this bondage of the will of man to the fatality of cause and effect, and all those speculations, which have so strengthened scepticism, concerning the possibility or impossibility of attesting a miracle, would have been prevented; and the present entire unbelief of a miracle being ever again, would, as ashamed, hide its face, instead of exposing itself in all public places. This power of miracles must either be speedily revived in the Church, or there will be a universal dominion of the mechanical philosophy; and faith will be fairly expelled, to give place to the law of cause and effect acting and ruling in the world of mind, as it doth in the world of sense. What now is preaching become, but the skill of a man to apply causes which may produce a certain known effect upon a congregation?—so much of argument, so much of eloquence, so much of pathos, so much of doctrine, so much of morality; and all to bring the audience into a certain frame of mind, and so dismiss them well wrought upon by the preacher and well pleased with themselves. The effectual check to all this would be, to dispute with the enemy in his fortress, to try conclusions with the law of cause and effect in astronomy, natural philosophy, chemistry, or any branch of natural science, where it holds itself supreme: to stop the sun, like Joshua: to make him travel back, like Isaiah; to walk upon the water, like our Lord; or to handle the viper, like the apostle Paul. The very existence of a will the cause of itself, is begun not only to be doubted, but to be denied. It also is looked upon as a substance, under the common bondage of cause and effect; and God himself is looked upon merely as a Great First Cause. I know nothing able to dethrone this monster from the throne of

God, which it hath usurped, but the reawakening of the Church to her long-forgotten privilege of working miracles. The miracle workers in the Church are Christ's hand, to show the strength that is in Him: the healers of diseases are His almoners, to show what pity and compassion are in Him; the faith-administrators are His lion-heart, to show how mighty and fearless He is; and the utterers of wisdom and knowledge are His mind, to show how rich and capacious it is. They do all contain, and exhibit and minister to the world, some portion of that fulness which is in Him, and which He alone is capable of holding in one subsistence; which when it enters into others, must prove the occupation and the honour and the ornament of many persons.

We now pass into another region, distinguished both from the more excellent way of charity and from spiritual gifts, in these words of the 14th chapter, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." And throughout the whole of that chapter He dwells upon this gift of prophecy, which is now before us, with a special delight, as the edification of the Church: "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort" (ver. 3;) and nothing seems he to have had so much at heart as that all should prophesy: "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied;" and again, "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (vers. 24, 25.) What is this gift of which the apostle maketh such high account? It is evidently very different from what is commonly understood by prophesying, as the mere foretelling of future events, because it is "unto men for edification and exhortation and comfort." But if that vulgar idea of prognostication be meant to represent the true character of a prophet of the Old Testament, nothing is so insufficient. Is the office of Moses or Elias, of Isaiah or Jeremiah, described by saying that they foretold future events? I trow not. Their office standeth in this, that they were God's mouth to men, fitted and furnished for uttering His own mind in adequate expressions, and for standing in the breach between the Church and the world—between the world and its destruction. Ah me! what a mischief hath been done by these wild schismatics, who, in their sectarian zeal to repress the free inquiries of the Church into the prophets, have dared to propagate it among their weak adherents, that these books of the prophets are only for the curious speculators into the future! Night unto you, O ye misleaders of the people!

If ye return not at the watchman's voice, the night and thick darkness abide you: any little twilight you now grope in will soon pass into the deepest, darkest midnight. O my misguided brethren! I tell you the prophets are the utterers of the Word of God for the weal of man. None of their writings is of any private interpretation to single men or generations of men or particular ages; but to the Church Catholic and universal: for they spake not after the will of men, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They are very profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. They are most profitable for holiness, both personal, ecclesiastical, and national. They reveal God in all His fulness and variety of being. They speak in human ears the strains of heaven. Oh! how very sublime, how very pathetic, how very moral, how very divine they are! It is the richest tissue of discourse that was ever woven. The poet, the orator, the merchant, the statesman, the divine, every form of spiritual workman, will find the instruments, and the measures, and the rules, and the chief performances of his art, therein. How many-sided are the prophets! How they stretch athwart the middle space between heaven and earth, lying all abroad in the most varied beauty! I am grieved, sore pained at my heart, that the affections of men should have departed away from such a feast of fat things. I cannot understand it. It did not use to be so. In my boyish days, when the firesides of the Scottish peasantry were my favourite haunts, and converse with the grey-headed elders of the Church my delight, their prayers were almost exclusively drawn from the Psalms and the prophets. Have I not heard them use those blessed passages with a savour and unction which indicated both intelligence and full feeling! Is the mind of man departed into the sere and yellow leaf? Is there to be no second spring? Are we ever to feed on the garbage of the magazines and the religious newspapers? God forbid! That rich and copious vein of rendering God's messages in forms of thought and language worthy of him, and powerful over the hearts and souls of men, which prophecy is in the hands of the Old Testament prophets, the apostle wisheth all the Church to study to possess; and being attained, he counts it of an unspeakable price in the ecclesiastical economy; insomuch, he saith, that if they were all thus to speak as from the heart of God to the heart of man, and there come into the assembly one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he says he cannot fail to be convinced and judged of them all. What a heart-searching, truth-telling thing must this prophecy, then, have been? Such a thing must prophesying have been—clear, true, warm, and tender; fresh from the heart; redolent with the affections of

God to sinful men; piercing and penetrating, yet not appalling, but cleansing and comforting, to the conscience. And this is what our preaching is intended to stand for? Wretched substitute! It seems to me that this gift of prophesying, which the Church are by the apostle called upon to covet above all other gifts of the Spirit, is the same gift which was ministered by the Old Testament prophets —the faculty of showing to all men their true estate in the sight of God, and their nearness to His judgments, and the way of escape; the faculty of doing for persons what they did for kingdoms and cities; foretelling being a part, but only a part of it; yet that to give warning of which the spirit of the prophet is stirred up to put forth all the powers and energies of the persuasive Spirit of God, that the evil may be avoided and the good attained. Such prophecies had gone before upon Timothy, and by them he is exhorted by the apostle to war a good warfare; and the gift is said to be given unto him by prophecy, as well as by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, (1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14.) Joining this with the declaration quoted above, that prophecy was fitted to convince and judge any stranger who by accident might come in, and to lay open the secrets of his heart, so that he should be forced to fall down and worship, as perceiving that God's eye was in them, and that things were known to them which no one but God and his own conscience could know, what can I say of this gift of the Spirit less than that it was God telling, by His chosen servant, His own knowledge of the secrets of a man's heart, that he might confess his sin and find forgiveness of it? One trembles to think that such a power should be given to men of looking into men: but if this power be with God, and He have given it to Christ, who possesseth those seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth; and if the Church be Christ's functionary, through which to express a manifestation of every attribute which He possesseth; then is it to be expected that there should also be found in the Church an order of men to use Christ's eyes with Christ's heart, and speak forth to the discovered and detected sinner such strains as these: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37;) "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. ix. 1;) "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn and live: Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel!" This, I think, is the true

idea of the gift of prophecy—that it was Christ speaking forth His love and His earnestness and His knowledge, to deliver each man from the roots of bitterness that are within him, and to warn him of the certain consequences which will ensue upon the evil course he is now following. The word of wisdom hath reference to truth, and the word of knowledge to faith, but prophecy hath reference to persons. It is for building up and comforting the Church, for converting sinners from the error of their ways, and warning the world of the evil to come. And that such a power is in the Spirit is as sure as that it is in Christ; and that He hath promised it to His Church is not only proved from its place in this enumeration, but is also clear from the express promise that the Spirit will show us things to come; from the example of the prophecies which went before on Timothy, and of the prophet who bound himself with Paul's girdle, and prophesied that the like would they do at Jerusalem to him who owned it. Our Lord showed many examples of the like personal prophesyings, over Peter, and Judas, and the two sons of Zebedee; and I have no doubt the primitive Church was all-rife with this gift of foreshowing to persons the future destinies which hung over them, and grounding thereon the same variety of all-inclusive discourse which the old prophets used towards cities and nations.

"To another, discerning of spirits." What this gift, or talent, committed to the keeping of the Church, is, we learn from the First Epistle of John, where he directeth the Church how to put it to use: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world," (1 John iv. 1.) From this we learn that the spirits which were to be tried or proved spake by the mouths of false prophets, and prompted them to utter things untrue and unholy. An example of this kind we have in the 22d chapter of the First Book of Kings, where, all the prophets of Ahab having prophesied that he should go up to Ramoth-gilead, Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord, explaineth the manner in which they had been deceived and had deceived him, in a passage which openeth much insight into the spiritual world; teaching how God useth the ministry of evil spirits in order to pervert from the way of truth those who have loved darkness rather than light; "sending them strong delusion that they should believe a lie;" and how these spirits take possession of wicked prophets who have not served the Spirit of Truth faithfully, and possess them with a word of falsehood; and how many of these prophets of lies may at once be under the influence of one of those unclean spirits. When the Lord, in the 7th and 24th chapters of Matthew, and Peter, in the 2nd chapter of his Second Epistle, warn

the Church of false prophets that should arise, they do not mean merely erroneous and deceiving men, but men possessed with a lying spirit. Indeed, I believe that in all cases the word prophet in the Scriptures, signifies a man under evil agency speaking in the power of another spirit than his own. A true prophet speaking in the power of the Holy Spirit, and a lying prophet speaking in the power of an unclean spirit. That this is the true meaning of the name prophet in the New Testament as in the Old, is further manifest from the language of the apostle: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," (1 Cor. xiv. 32.) Now in the passage of John's First Epistle, under consideration, the Church is required to try those spirits with which the prophets spake, whether they were of God or not: and there must, therefore, have been a gift given to the Church for this end, and persons to whom it was given to exercise it. The prophets tried men, but these men tried the prophets. The word "*discernment*" derives some illustration from the 14th chapter, where it is written in the 29th verse; "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others *discern*: and if to another sitting by there be a revelation, let the first be silent: for ye can all prophecy one by one, that all may learn and all be comforted; and the spirits of the prophets are in subjection to the prophets; for not of tumult is He the God, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." This passage shows us that the discerning of spirits was a faculty widely diffused in the Church, and required to be in continual exercise: and that the prophets, in the things which they uttered, were carefully and affectionately watched by the Church, and guarded from falling under the suggestions of the wicked spirits: and if, while one of them was speaking, there should have been any revelation to this effect, he was commanded to stop till he heard it, lest by any means he might mislead the brethren into error. It is very beautiful to observe, how no gift had a completeness in itself, but wanted the neighbourhood and help of another. The prophet needed the guardianship of the discerner of spirits, and the discerner of spirits the instruction of the prophet: the one brought the precious metal from the heavenly treasury, the other assayed it, lest it should have contracted any defilement or intermixture in the transmission. The apostle John further giveth, in the same passage, as a test of spirits, whether they confessed that "Jesus Christ is come in flesh" or not; and he repeats the same in his Second Epistle: Paul also, in the very chapter we are examining, gives us another test, whether they would say that "Jesus is the Lord." These two doctrines, of His flesh and of His lordship, are the two keys of prophecy, and the two tests of Divine truth,

which no evil spirit will bear. It is very ominous, that these are the two very points for which we are now persecuted by many, who deny Christ to have had flesh with the law of flesh; and deny that His lordship is of this earth—alleging, that, when Satan shall have served himself of it, it is to be destroyed. I have no doubt whatever that these are doctrines of devils, and that they bespeak a revival of Antichrist in the bosom of the Church. This capacity of discerning the spirits which speak in the prophets seems to have been very widely, and in a degree universally, spread abroad in the Church. For the same John, when writing concerning these antichrists, speaketh thus to the whole Church: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth: These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," (1 John. ii. 20, 21, 26, 27.) And our Lord, speaking upon the same subject of "false prophets," giveth their "fruits" as a test by which all men should be able to prove them, (Matt. vii.) But while all do, no doubt, possess such a measure of discernment as to reject the falsehood and feed upon the truth, those to whom this gift was specially granted had the higher faculty of being able to expose the sophistry, and the hypocrisy, and subtlety of the devil, with which it comes arrayed: and to these persons the Church would always be beholden in a time of trial; and, having reliance upon them, they would minister that caution, consideration, and admonition against the evil, which would be effectual to the preservation of the Church from heresies and offences which must needs arise. Moreover, I have little doubt that this gift of detecting false spirits in the speech of men was also accompanied with the power of casting them out, in all such cases as were consistent with the moral responsibility of the man possessed. The prophet, I believe, might be taken at unawares, and, himself deceived, become a deceiver of others: in this case, being undeceived by the faithful Discerner of spirits, he would make entreaty to be delivered, and, having faith in the presence and power of Christ in that man, he would be delivered without further delay. But in such a case as that referred to by John—of which those of Simon Magus, and Hymeneus, and Philetus, and Hermogenes are examples—where the wickedness of their own minds, their unfaithfulness to the Spirit of God, their time-serving, worldly, and

ambitious dispositions of mind, were the occasions of their being delivered up to such possessions, it is clear that, until they repented and confessed their sin, and sought the unity of the Church again, they could and would receive no such deliverance from the hand of the Discerner of spirits. This, surely, was a very precious gift to the Church: and if, as all Scripture concurreth to predict, "the last times," which immediately precede the coming of the Lord, shall be full of "false Christs and false prophets, who shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," we have need to stir up this gift which is in the Church. When we were weak and sickly, and gave him little trouble, Satan suffered us to go on declining, and took himself up with other matters; having administered to us the soporific of a lifeless system of orthodox terms, he went his way about other business: but, now that the Church is shaking herself from his bonds, and beginning to seek for her long-lost strength, and is putting it forth in word and deed, and lifting up the banner of truth, "Christ come in Flesh and to come in Lordship;" behold, he will send his Philistines upon us —spirits from the deep; and we will need the discernment of spirits to withstand him, nor shall we be without it. The Church is still the Church; her life is still in her, though sorely weakened; now she is beginning to breathe a purer air, and her faculties are returning; her weakened mind is beginning to understand doctrine, her miserable heart is beginning to conceive hope, and her closed lips to be opened with strong and fervent desires after her ancient strength and glory. Let her enemies beware; let the intruders into the fold make ready to depart; let those who have lorded it over her prepare themselves for a day of recompence, because it is at hand, when she shall come forth "bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." Moreover, this discernment of spirits is an excellent gift and kind ministry of Christ unto His Church, whereby she is able to hold forth the truth before the world, —that her Head hath judged Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; hath judged the prince of this world, the spirit that now ruleth in the children of disobedience: and not only so, but that He hath given to men the dominion over spirits, who through our wickedness have obtained dominion over us: and that His Church shall certainly trample Satan under foot, and judge angels, and triumph over all the powers of the enemy. But this brings us upon the vein which we have already opened when treating of the same endowment, as it was laid out in the promise of the Lord, whereof the first particular is, "Ye shall cast out devils." Referring back to what was there said concerning the importance and the bearing of this sign, we now pro-

ceed to the eighth of these forms of the manifested Spirit, which is "divers kinds of tongues."

This also having handled formerly, in the sense of a sign, and shown the thing which it signified, we shall add here what light is afforded us as to the manner of its use and occupation. It was first imparted on the day of Pentecost, "when the disciples were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," (Acts ii. 6.) Many, indeed almost all, have the notion that the apostles became all at once learned in and masters of foreign languages, so as to be able to express in the various tongues of men the knowledge which they possessed already. This is altogether an erroneous notion, as will appear; and the true one is contained in the words just quoted. They spoke according as the Spirit gave them to utter, not according to their own previous knowledge; and they spoke it in other tongues than that which was native to them. It was one acting of the Spirit to give them the matter and the word: it came to them clothed in word: not in the form of idea first, to be put by their volition and skill of language into the form of word; but at once, without their knowledge of the matter or of the word, it came to them; the Spirit gave them to utter what they did utter; what it was, they themselves might be ignorant of, or not, as it happened. It was one person's gift to speak the language, it was another's to interpret what was spoken: "To another, divers kinds of tongues; *to another*, the interpretation of tongues. . . . Do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? . . . Wherefore, let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. . . . If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. . . . Yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." These passages, extracted from the 12th and 14th chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, show that there was no necessary connexion between speaking with a tongue and understanding what was spoken; but, on the contrary, that the person so speaking in general understood not what he said; and if he did, the interpretation was a matter of as special revelation as was the utterance itself; both speaker and interpreter being alike ignorant of the meaning of any word which had been spoken, so as to be able to translate it into their mother tongue, or to know it grammatically, or in any way whatever to make use of it, until the Spirit moved again —or, rather, until the person possessed of the Spirit in this form put it forth into use. This idea, which is beyond a question the true one represented in these two chapters of the First Epistle to the

Corinthians, is, I think, implied in the words quoted above from the Acts, where the use of the gift is first described: "They spake with other tongues, just as the Spirit gave to them to emit the voice." The word translated "utterance" is remarkable, signifying simply to "emit a voice," to "sound forth," and by the ancients was used of prophets, whom they believed to speak by another power than their own. It is only three times used in the New Testament: once over again in this chapter, (ver. 14,) "But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and uttered," or sounded forth, "to them;" and the third time, Acts xxvi. 26, when Paul, being charged with being mad by Festus, probably from the violence of his voice or earnestness of his manner, replies, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth (give forth) words of truth and soberness." It was the Spirit which gave the disciples to send forth those sounds in which every nation there assembled heard their native tongue, and in it the wonderful works of God. It was Christ using His Church as His organ for declaring to all men in that assembly what God had done for him, and for them whose substitute He was. And no doubt this is one reason of the diversity of tongues in the Church, because there is a diversity of tongues in the world to which the Church is called to preach the gospel. But this is only an accidental thing; for the whole world was once of one tongue, and might be so again: still, however, even in that case the Spirit would in the same way bring the thought embodied in word, and force it forth in that embodied form. In such a case, however, it would be prophecy, as carrying its own interpretation; and accordingly the apostle puts speaking with tongues, when coupled with interpretation, upon the same level with prophecy: "For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying." I believe the words were sometimes brought to the prophet's mind, as much as to the mind of him who spake with tongues; and that both did yield themselves in faith to the action of the Spirit, and serve Him with their tongue. It is also manifest, with respect to him that spake with tongues, that, though he understood not what he said, it was not on that account without edification to him: he tasted the sweetness and had a first-fruits of the profitableness of that truth which the Spirit was passing through his tongue to the understanding of another man. This is very mysterious, but not the less true on that account. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him, howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edi-

fieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church," (1 Cor. xiv. 2–4.) This edification, which he derived from it to himself, joined to the wonderfulness of it, led some who possessed it to use it rashly and indiscreetly in the midst of the Church, where it could not profit; and to correct the selfishness from which this proceeded, and the confusion to which it gave rise, the apostle addresseth himself with great zeal. It hath been a subject of great thought with me to understand these things, which are the occasion of so much scoffing and blasphemy to many of my poor misguided countrymen; and I think God hath rewarded my study, of which I will now enumerate the results under their several heads.

First, This gift of tongues in the Church doth show that the work of Christ in the flesh is for all men, and that He wisheth it to be published to all men, and that His Church may not sleep over her vocation, nor be slack in the performance of it, nor sink down into local residences, good quarters, and comfortable settlements, but preserve her missionary spirit, and be a witness to every generation of every speech of men, she is endowed with these diversities of tongues, and goaded on to go forth to the nations, to seek ears for those words which are ever coming with such sweetness over her heart. It is like an ambassador's commission; it is the Spirit saying to the Church, Send me this man forth. Paul spoke more abundantly with tongues than they all did, (1 Cor. xiv. 18,) and Paul was the greatest missionary of them all. And what an assurance to a man's heart, and confirmation to his faith, to have his mission thus ascertained to him, and sealed by the Holy Ghost! Methinks it would be more effectual than a salary of a thousand pounds by the year from the most notable of our missionary societies. I feel assured that these societies have so shamefully and shockingly come short of the mark in their faith and feeling, and performance also, that, if the world is to receive warning before the great and terrible day of the Lord, it must be by the Church seeking again for this long-lost endowment; seeking for her trumpet with its many notes, through which to speak to the nations.

Secondly, This gift of tongues doth put beyond all doubt the unity of Christ and His members, inasmuch as it shows Him in His people doing whatever their own soul within them can do. Speech is the means by which an embodied spirit doth manifest its existence; distinguishing man, a living soul, from every other living thing upon the earth. Speech is the manifestation of reason; and by our capacity of uttering, and understanding the words uttered, is proved the commonness, the oneness of that reason, in which many persons have their being. Now when Christ doth occupy the place of my reasonable spirit, and

with my tongue doth express whatever I am capable of expressing, He is proved to be in me as truly as I am in myself. If my body is known to be the habitation of my soul by its obeying all the desires of the soul, and expressing them in form of word; then, by the same method of conviction is Christ proved to be in me, when He doth through the organs of my body express His own mind to those whom I can by no means reach by any expression of my own. This same truth, of an indwelling Christ, is proved by any other of the gifts to the experience of Him who hath them; but by the gift of tongues it is proved to others besides ourselves, even to all who hear in their own language the testimony of God and of Christ. It is seen that God is in me of a truth, when that power within me doth testify to no other person but to Christ, in His work of humiliation and exaltation, in His flesh and in His lordship. Now, if it be considered what a point of doctrine the union of Christ with believers is, the importance of the gift of tongues will the more appear. By the truth, that the Spirit of a man out of the world dwells in many men in the world at one and the same time, and continues this inhabitation from age to age, what less is proved but that this person is also God? For who but God can thus connect that which is not in the world with that which is in the world; who but God can keep up the communication and the intercourse between the Father's throne and the world? But, then, Christ's soul being a limited substance, with which the Godhead continually acts, another question ariseth, How can this limited substance, which is now out of the world, be yet in the world, in the souls of many men, in all ages of the world? This can only be by means of another Being, proceeding from Christ to the bounds of all space and time, and able to unite them into oneness with Him. But in order that this may be, he must be of one substance with Christ; and also he must be a person, in order to comprehend a person, and inform many persons with the same spirit. And thus is the Divinity and the Personality of the Comforter made to appear through this great truth of Christ the inhabiter of His people; which, again, is proved by His using their organs in a way in which they themselves are not able to do. Moreover, this power of Christ in the Spirit to speak all the diversities of speech, shows Him to be the fountain-head of speech, the word, by whose endowment man is a word-speaking creature: while by His power to enter into all the forms of reason, and deliver God in such a way as all diversities of reason shall apprehend, He is proved to be The one Reason, of whose fulness we have all received, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world. What doth this inhabitation of my reason by another than myself, at His will, and using it in a way

which unequivocally proves that He is another than myself; what doth this prove less than that I am but the tenant of that other's domain, who thus masterfully can occupy His own, and for the while suspend my vicegerency?

Thirdly, But there is something deeper still, than this oneness of reason and lordship of reason resident in Christ, proved by these gifts of tongues—namely, That a person is something more than that community of reason which he doth occupy as the tenant of him whose name is The Logos, or The Reason. For it clearly appeareth, from the 14th chapter of the First of Corinthians, that when the man's reason is wholly without fruit, when he understandeth nothing that is spoken, he doth yet receive great edification in his own spirit —"he edifieth himself," (ver. 4)—and holdeth, independent of reason, a communication with God—"he speaketh unto God," (ver. 2.) Doth not this prove that all forms of the reason within, which speech expresseth outwardly, may be inactive—as if it were dead, "fruitless" and barren—and yet the spirit itself be receiving great edification from God, through means which are wholly independent of intelligence? Indeed, to deny this, is to deny the possibility of direct communication between God and the soul otherwise than by speech or books which address us through the reason; it is to set aside the subject of spiritual gifts altogether: and methinks it takes away that personality from a man, by means of which it is that he informs, awakens, and occupies the gift of reason. The gift of tongues brings all speculation upon this subject to an end, and presents us with the fact, the experiment which decides the matter, by showing us the reason void, and the spirit yet filled with edification. Nay, so clearly were the apostle, and those to whom he wrote, conscious to this thing, that he takes a distinction between praying in the spirit and praying in the understanding, praising in the spirit and praising in the understanding; holding man to be capable of worshipping and serving God then when his understanding is wholly without activity. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 14–17.) Nor could there be any mysticism or self-deception in this; for while my spirit was emptying itself of all its prayer and praise to God, my understanding not comprehending a word, if any should think it were but a farce and profanation, another person, understanding the language, will contradict him, and let him know that it is sound sense and pure religion which I am expressing. And yet the words are not necessary for God's ear; and the apostle recommends, yea, and strongly urges it, that, when no man able to understand the language was present, or no one who had the gift of interpretation, it were better to keep silence, and enjoy the communion with God through the spirit only: "But if

there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself, and to God," (ver. 28.) What a deep subject of meditation were a man thus employed in secret converse with and enjoyment of God, although his reason be utterly dead! He is not able to communicate thereof to another person: for the world he is as one dead: for all that he holds in common with men he is as one dead: he is in the state of a separate spirit, and he is enjoying the same inward delight with God, which I suppose the separate spirits to enjoy. And, I might ask, Is this not the essence of all spiritual religion,—the enjoyment and communion of the spirit with God in that capacity which death nowise affecteth? And is not the use of reason altogether for the impartation of this to others, for the edification of the Church? But conclusion rises upon conclusion. It is a great subject this of the gift of tongues. I wish some one would retrieve it from the ignorance and folly and mockery of those revilers who have lately so insulted this mystery of our faith, and laughed to scorn this endowment of the Church, understanding no more by it than a shorthand way of acquiring languages.

Upon the ninth, and last of these gifts, "the interpretation of tongues," little need be added, as it is so intimately connected with the former. It did not consist in their knowledge of the strange words, or the structure of the foreign languages. It was nothing akin to translation; the Spirit did not become a schoolmaster at all; but brought to the man's soul with the certainty of truth, that this which He was giving him to utter was the interpretation of the thing which the other had just spoken. This conviction might be brought to the spirit of the speaker himself, and then he was his own interpreter; but it was more frequent to bestow that gift upon another. This provision of an order who should interpret, as well as an order who should speak with tongues, shows that the gift of tongues had a higher origin than from the variety of languages amongst men. If it had been merely for preaching the truth to people of other languages, an order of interpreters would never have been required at all. If it had only been given for conveying the truth to foreign nations, then why have so many in each Church, like the Church of Corinth? If it be said, this was to stir them to go forth to those whose tongues they had received; while I allow that this is so far forth good and true, it is by no means the whole truth; for why then, have an order of interpreters there also? This shows that the gift was good for that Church in itself; that it was resident in the churches for home use, as well as for service abroad; and that God saw such use in it, as to provide another ministry for the purpose of making it available to the uses for which it was given. If the cir-

cumstance of the language being foreign would have prompted them to go forth to the heathen, the interpretation being at hand would prompt them to remain with the Church; and both being standing orders in the Church, we conclude that this gift of speaking with another tongue, and the other gift of interpreting what was spoken, are, being taken together, a constant accomplishment of the Church, necessary to her completeness wherever she is, and to be continued with her, even though the whole world had been converted to the faith, and the office of the missionary were done away with for ever. Let us consider this twofold ordinance as one, and see what it yieldeth. If there should be in our Church an order of men, of whom the Spirit so manifestly took possession as to make them utter the mysteries of godliness in an unknown tongue, and another order of men to whom the Spirit divided the power of interpreting the same, the first impression that would be made by it is, that verily God was in us of a truth, as truly as He was in the Shechinah of the holy place; and the next, that He was speaking forth oracles for our obedience. The unknown tongue, as it began its strange sounds, would be equal to a voice from the glory, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts," or "This is my Son, Hear ye him;" and every ear would say, "Oh that I knew the voice;" and when the man with the gift of interpretation gave it out in the vernacular tongue, we would be filled with an awe, that it was no other than God who had spoken it. Methinks it is altogether equal to the speaking with the trumpet from the thick darkness of the Mount, or with a voice as thunder from the open vault of heaven. The using of man's organs is, indeed, a mark of a new dispensation, foretold as to come to pass after Christ ascended up on high, when He would receive gifts and bestow them upon men, that the Lord God might dwell, might have an habitation, in them. Formerly the sounds were syllabled we know not how, because God had not yet prepared for Himself a tent of flesh; which He accomplished to do first in Jesus of Nazareth, and is now perfecting in His Church, who are His temple, in whom He abideth as in the holy place, and from whom He speaketh forth His oracles in strange tongues. The strange tongue takes away all source of ambiguity, proving that the man himself has nothing to do with it, and leaves the work and the authority of the word wholly in the hand of God. And therefore tongues are called a sign to the unbeliever, (1 Cor. xiv. 22:) "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Just as the voice given at Bethabara over the baptized Christ was spoken as a ground of faith to the unbelieving Jew, and the voice given before His passion was a confirmation to the faith of the inquiring Greek, and

of all who heard it: so these voices, spoken forth from the breasts of men, by a power not human, but divine, are intended to convince the unbelievers that God really dwelleth in the Church; hath chosen the Church for His habitation; and that, if they would find Him, they must seek Him there, for nowhere else is He to be found. The prophet Isaiah, to whom it was given to forewarn men of this particular gift of tongues, doth so speak of it as a fresh evidence which God would give to men for a ground of believing, and which, alas! they would also reject. I take the quotation as the apostle hath sanctioned it, the Holy Spirit's version of His own words: "With men of other tongues, and other lips, will I speak unto this people: and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord," (1 Cor. xiv. 21.) I cannot but look upon this gift of tongues as sealing up the sum of God's dealings with men for their obedience of faith. It is the very power of God, which to blaspheme is to blaspheme the Holy Ghost. And witness what power it had on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were added to the Church. This is the "greater thing" which was to be done by him that believeth. No one could say that Jesus was the Christ, that God was in Him, but by the Spirit leading Him into the truth of what He spoke, or convincing Him of the Divine nature of the works which he did. God did not manifest Himself in Christ in this unequivocal way; for Christ's life was not a witness to Himself, but to the Father. Christ came to do the Father's will in our condition, that we in the like case might be assured of power and ability through Him to do the same. He was the prototype of a perfect and holy man under the conditions of the Fall, that we, under those conditions, might know there was power and will in God that we should all be perfect and holy. This being accomplished, and Christ ascended up on high, God sets on foot another work, which is to testify that honour to which man had become advanced in the person of the Son of man, and in all other persons who by faith should be united to Him. As God had shown how far man had fallen in Adam, by the state of the world under sin and suffering and death; so, by the Church would He show how far man had risen in Christ, that all men believing in Him might be brought to that exceeding exaltation. Therefore in the Church He shows not man's identity with the fallen Adam, but man's identity with the risen Adam. In the incarnation, Christ's identity with the fallen man was shown, yet without sin: in the Church, Christ's identity with God is shown, the power and glory of God in Him are exhibited, that all men might believe in His name. This gift of tongues is the crowning act of all. None of the old prophets had it, Christ had it not; it belongs to the dispensation of the Holy Ghost

proceeding from the risen Christ: it is the proclamation that man is enthroned in heaven, that man is the dwelling-place of God, that all creation, if they would know God, must give ear to man's tongue, and know the compass of reason. It is not we that speak, but Christ that speaketh. It is not in us as men that God speaks; but in us as members of Christ, as the Church and body of Christ, that God speaks. The honour is not to us, but to Christ; not to the Godhead of Christ, which is ever the same, but to the manhood of Christ, which hath been raised from the state of death to the state of being God's temple, God's most holy place, God's Shechinah, God's oracle, for ever and ever. "And yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord." It is most true, O God: they will not hear even this, because total ignorance has benighted them: nor are they capable of apprehending truth; the vanity of their minds hath carried them away: "They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink: for thou hast poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and hast closed their eyes; their prophets and the rulers the seers hath he covered." Then, O Lord, if thou hast given them up, and they may not be convinced, let this strengthen thy children, and against the rest let it turn for a testimony—a testimony to thy truth, a testimony to their falsehood and hypocrisy. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the children of the daughter of my people!"

Having thus opened at large the endowment of the Church, the body of Christ, and shown of what it is the first-fruits and the earnest, it may be expected that I should enter into controversy with those who say they have been withdrawn, and are not to be restored again; that they were only intended to abide for a season, until the evidence of the Christian religion should have been securely established, and the canon of Scripture completed. But, before I can think this worth the while, I must first see where they get the grounds of their hypothesis, that they were intended only to continue for that brief season; in the meantime I pronounce it to be of their own invention, and not at all of the word of God. I have shown the great purpose and end of this endowment of spiritual gifts; that purpose and end is not temporary, but perpetual, till Christ's coming again; when that which is perfect shall come, and that which is in part shall be done away. If they ask for an explanation of the fact that these powers have ceased in the Church, I answer, that they have decayed just as faith and holiness have decayed; but that they have ceased is not a matter so clear. Till the time of the Reformation, this opinion was never mooted in the

Church; and to this day the Roman Catholics, and every other portion of the Church but ourselves, maintain the very contrary. Moreover, it is only of later days that any one hath dared to assert that the gifts of prophecy and healing are no longer to be looked for. Read the lives of the Reformers, of the Puritans, of the Covenanters, written by sound and zealous Protestants; read the histories of the Church written more than fifty years ago—our Petrie, for example—and show me whether these writers hold it blasphemy to say that a man may be, and hath been, gifted with both these gifts, especially that of prophecy. Who has not heard of the prophecies of Huss, and of Wishart? Amongst the Protestants of the elder day, who had in them a good measure of faith, even beyond what their creed expressed, I find no such hard scepticism and mocking scorn as hath been sounded abroad within these months past, to the shame of those who have uttered it, if they be capable of the sense of shame. But if I am called upon to declare why Protestants have not enjoyed the manifestation of these gifts, I not only refer to the general tenor of their creed upon the subject, which hath leant to the side of their being ceased; but, which is of much more importance than a written creed, I refer to the spirit of their doctrine and their preaching and their practice. And I would say, that this gift hath ceased to be visible in the Church, because of her great ignorance concerning that work of Christ at His second coming, of which it is the continual sign; because of her most culpable ignorance of Christ's crowned glory, of which it is the continual demonstration; because of her indifference to the world without, for preaching to which the gift of the Holy Ghost is the continual furnishing and outfit of the Church. Since the Reformation, little else has been preached besides the baptismal and eucharistical gift, the work of Christ's death unto the justification and sanctification of the believer. The dignity and office of the Church, as the fulness of the Lord of all, hath not been fully preached, or firmly held, and is now almost altogether lost sight of. Church government, bickerings about the proper form of polity, and the standing of the civil magistrate to the Church and in the Church, have been almost the only things concerning the Church which have come into question among Protestants; and there hath been no holding of her up to the heathen as the holy place of God, but, on the contrary, the presentation of a Book in the stead thereof. Not but the Reformation was the beginning of a great and a good work; but that, so far from having made progress towards completion, it has gone a great way backward, and in our hands is a poor shred of what it was in the hands of Luther, and Hooker, and the like. But

things are taking a turn. Let the Church know that things are taking a mighty turn. There is a shining forth of truth in these subjects beyond former days. The power and glory of a risen Lord, as well as the holiness of a Lord in flesh, is beginning to be understood and discoursed of; and the enemy would spread a curtain of thin sophistry between the Church and the bright dawn: he might as well hide the morning by drawing before our eyes the spider's cobweb, or the frost-work of the night, which the rising sun quickly dissipates—and so, I trust, may these poor men, who write their unsober and uncharitable revilings in their several parcels of periodical abuse, be themselves, like the frost-work of the morning, absorbed into the glorious light which the rising morn is shedding around them. But be this as it may, now that the inward work of apprehending the glory of Christ is begun, and proceeding apace, we may surely expect that the outward means of convincing the world that it is no cunningly-contrived fable, will be afforded to the Church; and that she will have her full dignity restored to her of testifying not only to a holy Lord in flesh crucified for all men, but of a risen Lord in power and glory, crowned for His Church, and in His Church putting forth unto the world a first-fruits of that power and government over all creation which in her He shall ever exercise over all creation.—These gifts have ceased, I would say, just as the verdure and leaves and flowers and fruits, of the spring and summer and autumn, cease in winter, because, by the chill and wintry blasts which have blown over the Church, her power to put forth her glorious beauty hath been prevented. But because the winter is without a green leaf or beautiful flower, do men thereof argue that there shall be flowers and fruits no more? Trusting to the word of God, who hath created everything to produce and bring forth its kind, man puts out His hand in winter, and makes preparations for the coming year: so, if the Church be still in existence, and that no one denies; and if it be the law and end of her being to embody a first-fruits and earnest of the power which Christ is to put forth in the redemption of all nature; then, what though she hath been brought so low, her life is still in her, and that life will, under a more genial day, put forth its native powers. Will God be baffled in His own most perfect work, in that work which He hath wrought for the honour of His Son? I trow not. The Church is in the condition of a man faint, and sick, and apparently dead, who putteth forth neither manly voice nor vigorous action, and is even incapable of thought, and almost beyond feeling: but let that man revive again, (and we know the Church never dies,) and he will both hear and see and feel and act the man. So, if the Church reviveth, she

must act as the Church; which is not in the way of holiness merely, but in the way of power, for the manifestation of the completeness of Christ's work in flesh, and the first-fruits of the same work in glory. The Church is like a man who has been fed upon sloughs without fruits and husks without kernels, refuse which the swine should eat; and she is grown lean and weak and helpless; and, moreover, she has grown degraded in her ideas—she has forgotten the nobility of her birth and the grandeur of her destination: but what then? give her proper meat, give her nourishing drink, feed her with marrow and with fatness, and she will put forth her might again, and rejoice in her high places. The question is, whether that be the endowment of the Church which we have laid down above? If so, then rest assured that when she revives again she will embody the law according to which she was made, and show forth the beauty and put forth the power with which she was endowed in the day of her birth. If there be a revival, she will put forth contemporaneously and all together more knowledge, more love, more power, more holiness, more complete testimony to the power of Him whose members she is, of that Spirit which abideth in her, of that God which worketh all the gifts in all the members. They called Methodism and Evangelicalism a revival: I always have maintained, that, though better than downright Pelagianism, they were far behind the Reformation; which itself was only the beginning of a glorious work, strangled in its cradle. But now I see a revival worthy of the name—a revival of doctrine, of discipline, of holiness. Christians are beginning to speak their native language of faith and truth, and to endure their prerogative of being partakers of the Lord's sufferings. And if this revival proceed, it cannot but show itself in all those essential functions for which the Church was constituted; of which one is, to enjoy and hold forth a first-fruits of that power which Christ is to act out in the day of His appearing. I feel it of the greatest importance that those who are seeking to deter men from these great truths should be resisted, and that their mouths should be stopped: I feel it of still more importance that those who are inquiring and searching into these things should proceed with faith and prayer, under the guidance of God's holy Word.

And therefore with all patience, as one who is working for a master the work that his master hath set him to do, have I endeavoured to exhibit at large the Church's endowment of her great Head, consisting of two parts: the first, the inheritance of His complete work wrought in the flesh; the second, the first-fruits of the work which He is to work when He comes again. The former consisteth in perfect holiness, through the renewal of the soul;

which is strengthened to subdue the innate propensities of the flesh to evil, to crucify the world, and to overcome the evil one. This we have served out to us in the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; in the one of which we receive cleanness of conscience, and in the other participation of Christ's sanctified flesh and purchased inheritance. But none of these go further than to possess us of what He purchased in the flesh: "This is my body, given for you; this is my blood shed for the remission of sins:" His body, given for the life of the world; His blood, shed for the putting away of all sin. The Church hath perfect holiness ministered to her in these two ordinances; Christ doth thereby dispense that gift of the Spirit which was dispensed to Him by the Father in the days of His flesh, and by the faithful use of which He "sanctified Himself." And we, having in these most comfortable ordinances, that blessed fellowship of holiness, should sanctify ourselves, that we may be holy as He is holy. This is the work of the Spirit uniting us unto Christ; taking out of us our unholiness and grafting us into Christ. There is a power in the Spirit to wash the Ethiopian white. It is not in man, but it is in God, to do so; and the element with which to do it, He hath in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth away all sins. Every man baptized into the Church is answerable for a life of spotless, stainless holiness. What though no man hath yielded it? So much the more is the sinfulness of our nature proved, and the Divinity of Christ shown, who did present mortal flesh sinless: and let Him be glorified, and every man be a liar. But the truth of God standeth not the less sure. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." Out of this claim which God hath, and this power which we receive after baptism, for a perfect holiness come our confessions in the Church, which are confessions not only of the natural guilt and strength of sin, but of the deeper and deeper guilt which it hath contracted in our eyes by warring against the Spirit of God, and striking at the life of Christ in the soul of the believer. Not only a creation-defiling, but a Redeemer-slaying thing is sin; not only aiming at the work of God, but at the person of God manifest in flesh. This standard of perfection is what we measure ourselves by, and not each man's notion of what he can attain to. Man, though fallen into a state of weakness, is still kept responsible for the law of perfect holiness, as at the beginning: and he is brought to depend upon God the Redeemer, the incarnate God, the God proceeding forth into flesh to uphold it; and so believing in a God creating, a God incarnate, and a God proceeding forth upon flesh, in order to attain unto holiness, we attain thereunto, and are stable therein; and

so are brought into the great truth of God, that no holiness can be otherwise effected save by the faith of God in Trinity acting according to their offices. The sin which occurreth in the Church is through want of faith in the Godhead thus manifested; and that sin continually occurring, through the defect of our faith, is the occasion for a continual High Priest over the house of God, whose work of intercession may continually go on. Of this there is no doubt, that every member of Christ is bound and obliged to perfect holiness, and hath the means of fulfilling it: and however far he comes short thereof, he must take the guilt to himself, and not look upon it as an ordinance or appointment of God, as a necessary imperfection in the work of Christ, and a native impotency in the Holy Ghost. Now this is the more excellent way of charity or love, which the apostle commendeth above all spiritual gifts: it is the knowledge of Christ, and the being known of Him; the doing the will of the Father; for the want of which He shall not admit into the kingdom many who in that day shall come with their spiritual gifts in their hand, saying, "Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" This we never for a moment gainsay or undervalue, while we insist that, besides this, there is yet another thing resident in the Church; another work which she has to do besides the work of holiness in the flesh. We hold the highest doctrine here, both as to the importance of this personal holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord; and of its measure, even perfectness, whereof love is the bond. Let no one say, then, that we undervalue the sacramental ministration of a cleansed soul and a holy body, when we insist from the premises laid down above, that there is another office to which the Church is called besides this, and another endowment with which she is gifted by her Lord and Husband; the dowry, not of holiness only, but also of power. And for this she waited until He himself should, from the throne of God, shed it down abundantly upon His Church. Into both of these is the Church baptized, as Peter said: "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The remission, or putting away, of sin, is that *into* which we are baptized, as a thing done for the world by Christ's sacrifice of Himself: the gift of the Holy Ghost is that which to faith follows thereon—though, to convince Peter of God's equal goodness to the Gentiles, it was poured out upon Cornelius and his company before their baptism. The Samaritan Church had the gift of baptism without the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they received by the hands of the apostles; and thereby we perceive that the

Church may exist without the gift. But whether it is right in the sight of God that she should so exist, let any one judge, after perusing the things written above. We have shut ourselves out by unbelief from the enjoyment of one great part of our dowry; whereby not only are we straitened, but the glory of our Lord and Husband is obscured, the world is deprived of its witness and testimony, and the gracious ends of God, so far as we can, defeated; and guilt is upon our head, as baptized men, for not using that which we are baptized into, for the possession and for the use of which we are responsible. It is now three years since I drew the attention of the Church to this subject, and more than two since I published my views of it in the second of my homilies upon Baptism. Circumstances have occurred since to fix the attention of the Church upon it; and, lest men may be beguiled the one way or the other, we have felt it to be our duty to lay down the doctrine, according as we find it in the Holy Scriptures.

After this large exposition of the endowments with which Christ set forth His Church, and which are no longer found in her, we might now take upon us to reprove her unfaithfulness in not having kept these also till He come. But this is a matter of such vast importance, that we prefer rather to occupy ourselves with the instruction of her ignorance than the reproof of her faithlessness. And because there are many who boldly maintain that these gifts of the Holy Ghost were only imparted for a season, to serve a temporary end; and that it were folly, and little less than blasphemy, to expect their return; we deem it good, before dismissing this topic, to lay out from Scripture the broad ground upon which we maintain God's intention to have been that these gifts should remain as permanent as faith and holiness and charity.

1st, The promise contained in Psalm lxviii. 18, 19, as the same is by the Holy Ghost explained and applied in Ephesians iv. 7, 8, 11, 12. The promise is, that Christ, having ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, should receive gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also; that the Lord God might dwell among them: and the interpretation is, that these gifts, which He received of the Father upon His ascension, He did bestow upon men, in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," (Eph. iv. 12, 13.) What Christ received when He ascended up on high we know to be

the promise of the Holy Ghost, from Acts ii. 33, and various other parts of Scripture. And this gift of the Holy Ghost He gave to certain office-bearers in His Church; and thereby endowed them for edifying the body, until it shall be complete. Is that body, then, yet complete? No; nor will it be till He come again. How, then, should it be that the builders of this body should not still continue, for otherwise how were it to be builded up? and if both the builders and the work of building continue, then also the power by which they are constituted builders and fitted for their work. Here is an argument, to me irrefragable, for the continuance of the gift of the Holy Ghost in the Church till the number of the elect be accomplished and Christ shall come. And, instead of arguing against the continuance, it would be well for the builders and master-builders in the house of God to consider by what right they hold their office, and by what means they are fitted for it, if so be that the gift of the Holy Ghost, received by Christ upon His ascension, have ceased from the Church; and those amongst us who know and believe better, ought to be much exercised with shame and sorrow that we possess so little of the seal of our vocation, earnest in prayer and supplication, with faith, that we may speedily be furnished with what we lack. And it is to me manifest that this is the doctrine of the Church, which requires of every candidate for an office to declare at the outset that He hath the call of the Holy Ghost—or, in other words, the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the call to the office standeth in the gift; and all which the presbytery doth, is to make trial of these gifts, and ascertain whether it be really so, or only feigned to be so.

2dly, The promise contained in the 8th chapter of Isaiah, verse 18, as interpreted by the Holy Ghost in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ii. ver. 13, contains an evidence of the same decisive kind, that these gifts were intended for a continuance, and not for a time. The promise is part of the prophecy concerning Immanuel, who is foretold to become a stumbling-block and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; and it is immediately added, in contrast with them, concerning his disciples: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples; and I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children that the Lord hath given me are for signs and wonders in the land of Israel, from the Lord of Hosts which dwelleth in Mount Zion." These words the Apostle Paul hath referred to the Church, begotten to Christ by regeneration of the Holy Ghost. Of Christ, then, and of His children, it is said, that they are for signs and for wonders: and so it was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, in

the baptism by the Holy Ghost both of Jews and Gentiles on becoming children of Christ by faith: they were set for signs and for wonders. The prophet being concerned with Israel only, and showing forth the causes of that misery into which they are come, doth, after the rejection of Christ, state the rejection of His children also, who were set for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts. The apostle takes the language and applies it in general, without reference to the Jews in particular; and it is manifest from the context that the prophecy applies to all His disciples, amongst whom the law was bound up and the testimony sealed to the whole Church, which is the dwelling-place of the word of God, the oracle at which for not inquiring the world is destroyed. Now in respect of the time during which he and his children were to be for signs and wonders, it is so long as God hideth His face from the house of Jacob; so long as Christ waiteth and looketh to God for the fulfilment of His promise, that by Him Israel should be gathered. Here, then, in this brief description of the condition of Christ's disciples and children, we have it asserted that they are for signs and wonders upon the earth during the time of His sitting in expectation at the right hand of God. It is as much the oracle of God that His Church should be for signs and wonders as that the law should be bound up and the testimony sealed among us. It is not more their prerogative to be holy according to the law of God, and to speak according to His testimony, than it is that they should be for signs and wonders. Now let no one explain away this expression, "for signs and wonders," into a mere spiritual and invisible thing. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament these words, "signs and wonders," express always, without an exception, miraculous works, whether performed by the power of God or by the power of the evil one; and in the case before us they are such manifest tokens of God's presence with the disciples of Christ as shall make it a crime worthy of destruction for any people to blind themselves thereto. I hold, therefore, beyond a question, that the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Isaiah, did as surely predict for us an inheritance of miraculous powers, as Moses did predict to the children of Israel the inheritance of the promised land; and that as, when they turn unto the Lord with repentance of their sins and observance of His holy law, they shall possess their inheritance of Canaan, so surely shall we possess our inheritance of signs and wonders when we shall believe in the power of our risen Lord, and the privilege of the Church to enjoy a first-fruits thereof.

3dly, The promise in the 28th chapter of Isaiah, verse 11, as it is explained and applied by the Holy Ghost in the 14th chapter of the

First Epistle to the Corinthians, verse 21, is a demonstration that the gift of tongues, like signs and wonders, is a new method by which God would convince the world, and yet by which the world will not be convinced, whereby their guilt is exceedingly aggravated. In connexion with preaching of the rest unto the weary, which Christ literally fulfilled, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest," is connected this dispensation of the Holy Ghost speaking unto men by other tongues, for not hearing of which the Lord comes in judgment upon them. It is a part of the endeavour of God to convert men; it is a part of the probation which He takes of their wickedness; or, in other words, the preaching of peace and rest and refreshment to the weary is not the whole witness of Jesus Christ in the sight of the nations, but needeth to have added thereto the gift of tongues, which, as we have shown, is the greatest manifestation of God that can be made outwardly; and, if so, why have we it not still? Christ is defrauded of part of His testimony, the world is defrauded of part of her entreaty, and the Church hath all the blame.

4thly, The promise in Joel ii. 28–32, as it is interpreted and applied by the Holy Ghost in Acts ii. 17, is another unquestionable evidence of the perpetuity of these gifts in the Church. Though the passage in Joel, as being introduced by the word "afterward," and forming the conclusion of a chapter concerning the rejection, penitence, and restoration of Israel, might seem to be consequent thereon, we know, by Peter's application of it to the day of Pentecost, that it is not; as, indeed, is likewise evident from two internal marks—the one, that it takes place before the great and terrible day of the Lord; the other, that it is for a deliverance from that fearful destruction of nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat which the context immediately proceedeth to describe. The word translated "afterward" in our version, and in that of the seventy "after these things," hath not so much definiteness in the Hebrew, being simply "after;" and by the Apostle Peter it is rendered "in the latter days." The way which I would take to understand such an expression as "after," introducing a new scene or act in the prophets, would be to consider what was the main subject of the preceding act, not what was the last-mentioned particular. Now, though the last-mentioned particular be Israel's blessedness, the main subject is Israel's long rejection of God, and desolation at the hand of her enemies; concluding, as usual, with an assurance of restoration. This, then, is the action of God from which I should understand the outpouring of the Spirit as about to proceed; and the more, when I find that in the parallel passage of Isaiah it is expressly declared that the deso-

lation shall continue until the Spirit be poured out from on high, and that this shall be the means of the refreshment and restoration, (Isa. xxxii. 14, 15.) The Jews seem to have been of opinion that the outpouring of the Spirit is the beginning of a new subject, by making the second chapter to end and the third chapter to begin there. I am the more convinced of this by the study of the Book of Joel, which evidently consisteth of two parts—the former, including the first and second chapters, being the oppression of the Jews under the four monarchies, and the last direful confederacy against them, from which they are recovered with infinite and everlasting mercies. This general view of their sins and sufferings, of their repentance and restoration, having been given, the prophet hath opened to him the last great act more fully in the other vision; which begins with the outpouring of the Spirit before the great and terrible day of the Lord; then describes the judgment of the nations in that fearful time; and concludes with the everlasting glory of His people. Let us now consider the substance of the prophecy: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit," (Joel ii. 28, 29.) This is the enlargement of that gift, which heretofore had rested on a few prophets and seers in Israel, to the whole body of the people indiscriminately, without respect of sex, age, or occupation. Now we have the apostle's authority for believing that this gift of God began to be given on the day of Pentecost; and have we any means of ascertaining how long it was intended to abide? This we have, clear and determinate; for the apostle, in the same place, after concluding his discourse, calleth upon the heart-stricken people to come and be baptized: "For the promise," saith he, "is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The words "as many as the Lord our God shall call" are taken from the last words of the promise in Joel, "the remnant whom the Lord shall call;" and Peter's incorporation of them called on, with "them and their children," doth show that he embraced the whole of those five verses of Joel as one promise, then begun to be accomplished. This being made sure, we have in the two verses intervening, also quoted by him, a certain mark as to the term of the continuance of the prophecy: "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come." These

words are proper only to one event in this world's history, "when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven," (Matt. xxiv. 29:) and until this time, therefore, that promise holdeth good; until Christ come, the Spirit, heretofore confined to the prophets and seers, is indiscriminately bestowed upon all whom the Lord our God shall call by His gospel—upon all to whom salvation and deliverance are preached. The Church which the Lord called in Jerusalem, and which in its experiences was the pattern of the mother Church, received the Spirit indiscriminately, man, woman, and child; and when the type of the great day of the Lord came, in the destruction of Jerusalem, they also received deliverance and preservation from the sword and from the famine and from the pestilence, being in a wonderful manner suffered to escape from the doomed city. When the Gentiles were first called in the house of Cornelius, they received the outpouring of the Spirit indiscriminately; and in the churches planted among the Gentiles, these gifts were as various and abundant as among the Jews. And to the "remnant of the Gentiles whom the Lord shall call," the same promise of salvation and deliverance is preached; and there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in Christ. We are brought into the inheritance of all their blessings; and wherefore this promise of Joel concerning the outpouring of the Spirit, to give the gift of prophecy and of vision and of dreams, should be limited to the fathers and founders of the Church, when Joel himself assigns it as the prerogative of all flesh that are called until Christ come, I can by no means discover.

5thly, Our next argument to prove the intention of God in respect to the duration of these gifts, is drawn from the words of our Lord scattered throughout the Gospels, and especially in His instructions to those who should preach His gospel. When He sent out the seventy—or rather when they returned from their first mission—He said unto them, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents or scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you," (Luke x. 19;) and this, observe, not to the twelve apostles, but to the seventy. Again, twice over He saith unto His disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you," (Matt. xvii. 20; see also Matt. xxi. 21.) Now this, which He said unto the twelve and the seventy and His disciples in general, He extendeth to every one who hath faith in Him, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believe on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father," (John xiv. 12.) In the same dis-

course He promiseth to them the Comforter, of whom He asserteth that He shall show them things to come. This Comforter came not till the day of Pentecost; and in what form He came, of tongues and miracles and prophecy, is known to all. Then the Church received the Holy Ghost. Also in the same way of miraculous powers did the Samaritan Church receive the Holy Ghost, (Acts v.;) and in the same way of speaking with tongues did Cornelius and his company receive the Holy Ghost, (Acts x. 45:) and seeing that in these three capital instances the Holy Ghost came with His illumination, and His teaching, and His power of magnifying God, in this form of tongues and prophecy and miracles, what is the authority for severing Him from that His chosen form, and saying that He shall not so be manifested any more; although Christ declared that to believers He would bring the power of doing greater works than He had done? Let us now look more particularly to the instructions given by our Lord concerning the preaching of the gospel. In Matthew they are thus delivered, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," (xxviii. 18–20.) Behold what reasons the Lord assigns for their going to preach. It is His omnipotency in heaven and in earth; it is the power that is given to Him: power not only in heaven, the region of the spiritual; but also in earth, the region of the visible. As the head Commissioner, therefore, of the preachers, He would be known as the possessor of power; and in this character He promises to be with them until the end of the age, and the time of His re-appearing. Now of what kind this power is, in the demonstration of which He would have His gospel preached, is declared in the parallel passage, upon which we have largely commented above: power over devils, over serpents, over poisons, over diseases, and power to speak with tongues. When this power was received by the first preachers, and of what kind it was, is again distinctly declared in the parallel passage of the Gospel by Luke: "And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," (chap. xxiv. 48, 49.) The corresponding passage in the Acts of the Apostles seals up this matter, and shows that the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost is that presence of the all-powerful Jesus in which the gospel should be preached: "Jesus, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the

promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . . . And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," (Acts i. 4, 5, 7, 8.) Now how much of the success of their preaching stood in this very thing, let the prayer of the brethren, when all the powers of earth were set against them, testify. What it was that gave them boldness to preach in that perilous city of Jerusalem, and in that day of confederacy against Christ, let these words of the only recorded prayer of the Church testify: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness," (Acts iv. 29–31.) Moreover, how much the apostle Paul rests the authority of his office as an apostle upon the demonstration which the Holy Ghost gave to his words, by communicating gifts of the Spirit, let these words to the Corinthians prove, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5;) and these words to the Galatians, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" And also let it be observed how Peter justified himself to the rest of the apostles, for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, by the same argument: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?" But now how changed is the Church! Because in a certain corner of the vineyard of Scotland a certain minister's preaching is said to have been attested by the gift of tongues, without inquiring, or caring to inquire, whether it really be so or no; and if it be so, hailing him as the beloved and honoured of the Lord; have we not rushed upon him with open mouth, and raged against him with heathenish violence, and are even now seek-

ing to cast him out of the Church? I wash my hands of such cruelty and infidelity: I lift up my solemn, though it should be solitary, protest against it, as a minister of the Church of Scotland, and pray and wait for better times. If so be that this is the gift of tongues—and why should I, with such witness, doubt it?—then hail to thee, thou honoured minister of Christ! The Lord gave me to declare the Church's right to these gifts years ago; but to thee and to thy words hath He given the higher sanction of the very gifts: for these verily are, by the Lord Jesus and His apostles, looked upon as the highest outward testimonies of God to the truth.

Before leaving this testimony, derived from the very lips of Christ himself, I would put forth one or two of a less direct kind, and yet, perhaps, on that account only the more forcible. In the sermon on the mount, when referring to the day of judgment, when He shall sit to determine who must enter into the kingdom of heaven, He saith, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) Now I would ask, if to work miracles, and to prophesy, and to cast out devils, were only intended to be local and partial, and not universal and continual in the Church, why should our Lord pitch upon these as insufficient testimonials of one who doth the will of His Father, of one whom Jesus knoweth? But taking it to be intended of God that these should remain in His Church as gifts, for the use of which their possessors were responsible; that with them they should both edify themselves and edify the Church; it then becomes a most appropriate point of instruction and warning, to make us know that gifts are not graces, but signs of the grace of God to us; intended to beget gratitude and love to Him, and to the Lord Jesus who procured them for us by ascending up on high. Then it becomes exactly parallel with that beautiful contrast of spiritual gifts with love which Paul makes in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Another of those cross lights cast upon this subject is to be found in that continual prediction of signs and wonders to be wrought by Satan and his false prophets on the eve of the coming of the Lord: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect," (Matt. xxiv. 24.) Now, if it had been God's purpose that signs and wonders were to be in the Church only for a short season, during the lives of the apostles, or some few years after them, and never again to be needed or expected, what could Satan look for from a

Church thus dead to the desire or expectation of signs and wonders, but to be treated as an impostor? Either the Church must change her present opinion, and begin to think that signs and wonders may again be looked for from God, or else Satan will bring rejection upon himself when he shall thus offer his credentials: just as, unless an expectation of Christ shall be again awakened in the Church, false Christs will present themselves in vain; unless a spirit of prophecy be given to the Church, false prophets will present themselves in vain; unless signs and wonders be given to the Church, false signs and wonders will be looked for in vain. Now, believing the words of the Lord, that false Christs, false prophets, and false miracles, of great subtlety, shall be presented by Satan to the Church before the great day of the Lord, I most certainly believe that beforehand there will be given by God both the hope and the desire of Christ's appearing, the gift of prophecy, and the power of miracles; unto which condition of things Satan will present all his power of delusion, and will certainly delude many, nay, all but the elect. Therefore, while I argue so patiently and so zealously for the truth of God's intention in this matter, I am far from any exaggeration of the peculiar safety of such gifted persons, and of such a gifted condition of the Church; but do, on the other hand, clearly perceive that they will straightway become the object of Satan's spiritual temptations, as the Church that now is is the object of his worldly temptations; and all persons will fall before him, save those who are rooted and grounded and built up in love. And I foresee, moreover, that the scandal of these spiritual defections and transgressions will be so great in the sight of the world, so nearly allied to folly and to frenzy, that it will be with the loss of all worldly reputation that any man will dare to profess his faith in a Lord instantly about to appear, or in a Church possessing miraculous powers, or in a ministry gifted with the gift of prophecy.

6thly, The notices which are found in the Apostolical Epistles concerning these gifts, affords another, and perhaps the strongest, proof of all, that they were as much given for continuance as those fruits of the Spirit which are in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. In the 12th chapter of the Romans, the gift of prophesying is mentioned in the same connexion with the ministry, teaching, exhortation, ruling, and so forth. In the 4th of the First Epistle of Peter, "speaking as the oracles of God" is mentioned along with "ministering to the necessities of others." In the 6th chapter of the Hebrews, "being made partakers of the Holy Ghost," is mentioned along with being "enlightened, and tasting the good word of God." In the First of Timothy, "the prophecies that went be-

fore" are referred to as a ground of His confidence in the warfare, and an assurance of His gift, along with the charge of the apostle, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. But the most striking example of this is to be found in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where spiritual gifts are made the marks of the several members in the body of Christ. After considering the diversities of these gifts, He giveth as the reason of this diversity, that they might make up one body together, and would be incomplete without one another. They are likened in the Church to the offices which the eye and the ear and the hand and the foot have to sustain in the human body. Now, this is strange language to use, if so be that these gifts were intended only for a season. Why identify them with the memberships of the body in that case? why connect that which is temporary, as the sign, yea, and the cause, of that which is perpetual? For that the body should have many memberships is a perpetual ordinance in the Church, at least until Christ come: and therefore I believe that these gifts, in the variety of which the various memberships stand, were likewise so intended to continue. Moreover, the apostle doth set these gifts into contrast with love—which also he enlargeth upon, describing its excellent qualities—and then, without a hint of any difference with respect to their continuance in the Church, he proceeds to treat of spiritual gifts again. Now, methinks, when he was putting forth the super-excellence of love over all spiritual gifts, if so be that the spiritual gifts were intended only for a short season in the Church, he would have seized hold on this at once. He doth, indeed, say that prophecies shall fail, and that tongues shall cease, and that knowledge shall vanish away; but when? let the apostle himself say: "When that which is perfect is come; when we shall know even as we are known." And no one, I believe, will say that this time is yet come, nor is to come until the coming of Christ. We have argued above, that these gifts are but a first-fruits or earnest of that perfect thing which is to be enjoyed in the day of the redemption of the inheritance. Then, indeed, the present partial ministrations shall give way to that complete and perfect man which we shall be when the body is redeemed from the grave, and we shall be like Him who is our life.

Before leaving these three chapters, which contain the fullest account of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, we think it good to remove one objection to their continuance in the Church, which may be grounded upon the 13th verse of the 13th chapter: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity . . . but the greatest of these is charity." What, it may be said, is the intention of the apostle in separating from all other gifts,

faith, hope, and charity, and saying that they remain? Is it not as much as to say, that they only remain? To answer this question aright will require an examination of the context. The apostle, having in the 12th chapter given to spiritual gifts their place, as distinguishing the members of Christ from one another, and together constituting the completeness of the body, doth proceed in the 13th chapter to explain that common principle of regenerate life which unites the members into one body with Christ their head. To this principle, which constitutes the community of Christ, he giveth the name of love: as it is written, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love." Without this root and ground of love, he declares that every gift would be as much abused as if the hand were to lift itself against the heart, or the tongue to tell lies of the wants of the other members. In the body there is the unity of one life, of one mind, and one will. This answereth to love in the body of Christ, which is the bond of perfectness. Besides this, there are in the body various members which, besides a common life, a common sympathy of pleasure and of pain, have various uses and occupations; in which diligently ministering, the whole body grows up fitly proportioned, and properly adapted for the functions of a perfect man. This answereth to the diversities of gifts and ministries and in-workings of God in the Church. But if the members of the body will not do their several parts—the limbs refusing to bear, or the hands to work, or the eyes to explore—then the child grows up weak and ill-proportioned, and the man falls into disease and helplessness. The edification of the body, the building of it up in stature and strength, cometh, as is well known to the physiologist, and indeed to every person less or more, from the labour of each member in his several place at his several occupation. This is so beautifully applied to the Church in chap. iv. of the Ephesians, that I cannot help quoting three verses out of a passage to which I have referred already, and do again refer all who would understand the proper constitution of the Church: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love," (vers. 14–16.) Now, so much of the Church's edification standing in each member fulfilling his separate office in love to the whole, the apostle

in the 13th of the First of Corinthians sets forth the actings of this love, amongst which faith and hope occur: "Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things." This done, he proceeds at the 8th verse to set forth the supremacy of love by another consideration altogether—to wit, that it never faileth, which is more than can be said of the gifts peculiar to the members; whereof he mentions three by name, prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, as being to last only till the perfect thing be come of which these gifts of the Holy Ghost were the first-fruits and earnest; whereas love, being the bond of our union with Christ and with God, must continue evermore unabated in its strength. Now this love includes both faith and hope, and all other fruits of the Spirit; and itself is a fruit of the Spirit, often enumerated as one among the rest. Now, to express its pre-eminence here also, its pre-eminence as it were amongst its own children, he chooses out the three principal graces—faith, hope, and love—and asserteth that here also love is the greatest and the best. While I believe this to be the thing substantially contained in the 13th verse, I have attended also to the peculiarity of the language, "*Now* abideth faith, hope, charity;" and I have this to observe upon it; The word, "now," cannot be used *adverbially*, as signifying "at that time," but *conjunctively*, as introducing the conclusion of his eulogy of charity; for he had stated that all the gifts were in the Church at that time, and in the next verse he tells them to covet earnestly those gifts. But, allowing this, what is the meaning of this word "*abideth?*" The same, I think, with the "never faileth" of verse 8. He would express, as the conclusion of what he had said, that love was to remain for ever. But along with this he would also express another truth,—that, amongst the other permanent graces of the Spirit which compose the renewed image of God, love stood pre-eminent; he would contemplate it, not as a mother principle of godliness, but as one amongst its own children; and of these children he takes not patience, or joy, or chastity, but faith and hope, which have a pre-eminence given to them in many parts of Scripture—as Rom. v. 1, 2; 1 Tim. i. 5; Heb. xi. 1—in order to give love its eternal prerogative of being the first, the greatest, and the best, the fountain-head of God's manifestations of Himself, and which He would have to be the fountain-head of all His creatures' manifestations of themselves. For I believe it to be a common error, that faith and hope will cease through eternity any more than love. Faith is the very condition of a creature towards the Creator. The Creator never ceases to do good to His creature; His goodness is never all paid off; He never by an act discontinues His future acting, and being so that He is ever loving to be gra-

cious, His creatures must ever be trusting in Him for the supply of that grace. The Holy Spirit's action in the creature is what it was shown to be in Christ,—perfect faith upon the perfect goodness of the invisible and incomprehensible God. Faith, therefore, is an essential attribute of the creature possessed by the Holy Ghost: and so is hope, for even now that Christ is upon the throne of the Father, He is hoping, waiting, or expecting, until His enemies be made His footstool; and so it must be to every creature who is constituted under the conditions of time. The acting of the Holy Spirit's confidence towards God with respect to things future, is hope. Moreover, they are constituent parts of love; and if love is to abide, they must abide also. This last verse, therefore, is merely an assertion of the eternal duration of love, and its supremacy among the other graces, which likewise eternally endure, in contradistinction from those gifts which are to continue only until the perfection of our being in the redemption of the body and the restoration of our inheritance. Indeed, throughout the whole discourse there is not a hint of any kind to lead us even to suspect that the apostle had any notion that these gifts were to be discontinued after a few years, or at most after one or two centuries. There is not a hint for suspecting that he had any such notion as that commonly entertained, that these miraculous endowments were merely to obtain credence for the doctrine which the apostles promulgated; and this done, that they were to cease. I will examine this notion more particularly hereafter: I only speak now as to its origin; and this I maintain, that, originate where it may, it hath no origin, ground, nor semblance of authority in the Holy Scriptures. Throughout these three chapters, which have no other object than to treat of the spiritual gifts, as contradistinguished from the fruits of the Spirit; of the outward manifestations of the Spirit, as distinguished from his inward regeneration; there is not—I say it again—a hint that both equally are not conditions of the Church, permanent as her permanency under this present dispensation, until the perfection come. They stand together in the apostle's mind, as corequisites to the being and well-being of the Church; the one requisite to the community of her members, the other requisite to their mutual dependence upon one another, and their common contribution to the edification of the whole; and nothing but that same blindness which hath made men reading the Bible never to perceive a second coming of the Lord, could have made them never to perceive that these gifts were intended to remain.

7thly, The seventh and last consideration by which I am myself persuaded, and would persuade others, of the truth of these things,

is an awful one indeed, which it almost overwhelms me to state, but which, after three years constant meditation of it, I think I may not any longer hide. It is three years since I publicly expressed my sober conviction that every baptized person is responsible to God for the possession of some of those gifts included generally under the appellation of spirituals in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: and, before showing more at large the grounds of this conviction, which three years of free and open discussion with my brethren hath rather confirmed than weakened, I will extract from my published writings the paragraph wherein it is contained. In the second homily on Baptism will be found this paragraph:—

"The other part of the dispensation of the grace of God under which the baptized are brought, is expressed in these words, 'And ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.' By which, they say, we ought to understand, not the outward gift of power which hath ceased, but the inward gift of sanctification and fruitfulness, which we all believe to be co-essential in the salvation of a sinner with the work of Christ itself. But for my own part I am inclined to understand both; for I cannot find by what writ of God any part of the spiritual gift was irrevocably removed from the Church. I see, indeed, that she hath lost the power which heretofore made her terrible as an army with banners; so also hath she lost the bright and glorious raiment which made her fair as the moon and clear as the sun; but why she may not hope, yea, assuredly believe, to have the former, when the Lord shall see it good, as well as the latter, is what I cannot see, the one being truly as supernatural a work of God as is the other. For that the works which the first disciples were enabled to work was a true fruit of the Holy Spirit is not only manifest from their being constantly named by His name—as in Acts x. 45, 'Because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost: for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God,' (this being the visible sign of the invisible grace)—but is put beyond all doubt by the apostle's enumeration of the diversity of the Spirit's operations; as it is written, 1 Cor. xii. 7–11, 'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' Now, it is not for

man, without some far more cogent reason than the mere fact of their being withdrawn, to preclude and prevent you from expecting the whole gift with which at any time it hath pleased God to endow His Church. It is not for any man, by an arbitrary distinction, for which I can find no warrant in Scripture, to name the one part ordinary and the other part extraordinary; and, upon the strength of this arbitrary division, to say the former was never intended to be continued, but the latter only. The better way of expressing the truth is to say, That in the first ages, the faith of the Church being great, her possession of the earnest of the Spirit was great: her expectation and her prayer being great, her answer and her receipt was great. But as she abused the day-spring which arose upon her from on high, and employed the glory of the morning in idle and unprofitable and wicked works; not valuing the gift of pure and holy light, of warm and vigorous life; the Lord from time to time withdrew His talents, and sentenced her to that poverty under which we now behold her;—and of which I will say, that while I bow with resignation to the will of God, I will never cease to use the withdrawal of these gifts as an argument of our being under the judgment and wrath of God; while I regard that account of the matter with which we content ourselves—that the extraordinary have been withdrawn from us, but the ordinary remain—as a poor shift to remove the blame off from our shoulders, and as making an unworthy use of the Divine purpose and intention. That it was a part of the Divine purpose to bring the Gentile Church under this deprivation of the Holy Ghost, as He formerly did bring the Jewish Church under blindness and deafness to the voice of their prophets, there can be no doubt: but, in like manner as they are continually rebuked, and were at length cast out from being the Lord's people, for this very cause; so do we underlie a present rebuke; and it ought to be the continual argument of the preachers of the truth, and to form the grounds of continual admonition and warning of judgment speedily about to come. And therefore I present it to you, my Christian brethren, as the ground of deepest humility in the sight of God, and most sorrowful repentance and painful intercession, like unto Daniel's, that we have been brought into this state of impotency, which argues a like state of unholiness. For these two, holiness in the inward parts and power in the outward, go together in the dispensations of the Spirit unto His Church. And being thus convinced in my mind, and moved in my spirit, I do not hesitate to affirm, that all we who have been baptized were baptized unto the fulness of the spiritual gifts, according as it might please God to divide unto every man, whether the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the

gift of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, or the interpretation of tongues; each one of these being the outward sign of a particular inward operation of the Spirit upon the soul, and qualifying the soul for profiting the Church with that inward gift which is given to it. These are the signs of the Spirit's presence. And observe what is the fruit of His presence: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,' (Gal. v. 22, 23.) And again: 'The fruit of the Spirit is, in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth,' (Eph. v. 9.) And again: 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death,' (Rom. viii. 1, 2.) 'But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead indeed because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,' (ver. 9–18.)"

The judgment given in this passage has been confirmed to me by a more careful consideration of the passage in the 2d of the Acts, in connexion with other passages of Scripture. The people whom Peter addressed were in the midst of astonishment at what they heard and saw; ignorant men speaking the marvellous works of God, unlearned men speaking all the tongues of the known world. Peter rose up to explain to them what it was; and told them that it was the fulfilment of the promise of Joel, that the Spirit which had resided in the prophets was to reside in all flesh, man, woman, and child indiscriminately; that the office which had been fulfilled by a series of prophets, ending with Jesus of Nazareth, was now to be fulfilled by

a body of people, of whom Jesus of Nazareth, now both Christ and Lord, is both the Head and soul: and when Peter perceived that his discourse had taken hold upon the people, and they asked what they should do, he answered them, Come and be baptized into the faith of Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive this gift of the Holy Ghost which we have received: for the promise in Joel is not to a few, but to all flesh, even: "to you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And upon being baptized, he expressly declares that they shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now, was Peter deceiving the people? was he then preaching baptism to them with another and a better promise annexed to it than he would have done to others? Surely no: for he says the promise was not only to them and to their children, but likewise to all that were afar off, to every one whom God should call with the gospel call. Now, what can we make of it then, but to allow that baptism, as preached by the apostles, that Christian baptism, hath the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy connected with it; and that the baptized are responsible for the possession and exercise of the same? But because this is a conclusion of great moment, it ought to be confirmed with all concurrent testimony of the Scriptures. And, first, I refer to the connexion, invariably preserved in our Lord's instructions to His apostles and disciples, between the preaching of the gospel and the possession of power; and particularly to the 24th of Luke, where, in virtue of Christ's suffering and rising from the dead, "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," (ver. 47.) But with respect to the promise of the Father, and power from on high, He tells them to tarry for it. Here, then, is a space of time, the time between Christ's resurrection and the day of Pentecost, during which repentance and remission of sins might be preached; but the power from on high and the promise of the Father might not be preached, otherwise than as about to be: that is, John's baptism, which is unto repentance and remission, but not Christ's baptism, which is unto the gift of the Holy Ghost. Christ himself received these two baptisms immediately, the one upon the other; not so the apostles, and others who were baptized by John, and who baptized into the baptism of John. They remained without the baptism of the Holy Ghost till the day of Pentecost, and on the day of Pentecost they received it. There was no remission of sins by the law, but, on the other hand, an imputation of sins, which could not be remitted but by the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins that were under the first testament. John came to hold up Christ as the Lamb of God, by whom not only these, but all other sins, were taken away. And he likewise held Him up in another light,

as He who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. By His death, and resurrection, and ascension unto the Father, He both took away sin from all flesh, and showed it to be taken away; for sin cannot enter into the presence of God. By sending down the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, He showed Himself to be the baptizer with the Holy Ghost. From that time forth these two unspeakable gifts, —the gift of holiness, and the gift of power; remission or putting away of sins, and endowment with the Holy Ghost—became joined together as the privilege of Christian baptism; and on the day of Pentecost Peter joined them together: and what God then joined, let no man part asunder. A curious confirmation of this truth occurs in the case of the Samaritan Church, narrated in the 8th of the Acts, where, Philip having baptized them into the faith of Jesus, the apostles, hearing thereof, sent down Peter and John, who were not satisfied until they had prayed for them, and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. This shows two things: first, that the gift of the Holy Ghost is a distinct thing from the remission of sins and regeneration, wrought in baptism; and that the latter can exist without the former, which is the only comfort to the Church labouring under the absence and loss of these gifts. But whereas the apostles, hearing of this, immediately took order to communicate that which was lacking, and did communicate it by the laying on of their hands, it is proved, secondly, that this state of destitution is not the right one before God, but ought with all speed to be supplied with what it lacketh. And now, lest any one from that instance might have argued that these gifts, over and above regeneration and holiness, were not without the laying on of the apostles' hands to be obtained, the Holy Ghost hath given us another instance, in the 10th and 11th chapters of the Acts, wherein the same apostle Peter, though honoured to declare the truth by preaching, was set aside in this matter of the Holy Ghost, which Christ ministered directly, without either the outward sign of baptism or of the laying on of hands. And now, as the former instance was our consolation under our present bereavement, so this is our encouragement to expect these gifts, though we have no hand of an apostle to be laid upon us. When the Church shall have rightly apprehended and fully believed the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, as we are now endeavouring to lay it down, she shall not have long to wait until she receive the thing which we declare. How very remarkable is Peter's comment, or rather reflection, at the time this took place: "Then remembered I," saith he, "the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost;" making it to me most manifest that baptism with the Holy Ghost is indeed neither less nor

more than these spiritual gifts. Not but that the work of putting away sin and regeneration into holiness is likewise wrought by the Holy Ghost, or rather by the Spirit of Christ, bringing forth of His holy manhood the life of a holy manhood into us; but that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is something distinct from and more than this, even a gift from God to His new-born child, a talent for His newly *ἀρτι* servant, upon which he is to trade, with which he is to profit the body of the Church, and in doing so to edify himself and earn a glorious reward. Now, there is one other instance in the Acts of the Apostles, and that in some respects more remarkable than the two preceding, recorded in the 19th chapter of the Acts; where Paul, having found at Ephesus certain disciples, asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed; and they said unto him, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," (literally, "but we have not even heard if the Holy Ghost is")—that is, they had not been visited by any one of the disciples who were baptized with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—yet had they received the baptism of repentance, or change of heart, or putting away of sin, or regeneration; which regeneration Christ preached to Nicodemus as a thing then upon the earth, which was to be seen and heard everywhere. Then were these men baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul laid his hands on them they received the Holy Ghost. Here, then, Christian baptism is by Paul, as by Peter, connected with, and made especially to stand in, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Paul's own case is, perhaps, the most remarkable of all, where without any notice of baptism, (but it may be that he had been baptized in John's baptism,) without any hand of an apostle, but of a common disciple, Ananias, he received the gift of the Holy Ghost. These formal instances are confirmed by many incidental and casual mention of these things in the Apostolical Epistles, of which I will only notice one, the 6th chapter of the Hebrews; where the foundation and first principles of Christ are enumerated to be, repentance from dead works, faith upon God, the doctrine of baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection from the dead, and the eternal judgment; and those who had partaken of this initiation are described in the following verse in these words: "The enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift," (in opposition to the earthly things preached to Nicodemus,) "become partakers of the Holy Ghost, having tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the coming age." Now tell me, if these miraculous powers and heavenly gifts had been only for a season conferred, how our apostle would have thus used them, and them chiefly, when warning the Church concerning apostasy.

It is not to be supposed that he would mix up the things of a day with lessons intended to endure as long as the Church endureth. I think these observations ought to be sufficient to convince every one who trembles at God's Word, and trembles not at the precepts of man, that the subject which we are handling is one of great and grave concernment to the Church, and to every believer. Let ignorant and wicked men scoff how they please, that it is not good for any Christian to put away the subject from him, as one of small moment to his soul; for if the soul's well-being standeth in her being able to give a good account of her stewardship, and this gift of the Holy Ghost be indeed a stewardship of the regenerate soul, the case of those must be very perilous indeed who refuse to hear any word concerning the same. Nay, but what is the condition of us all baptized persons? Are we not verily in the case of that servant who hid his talent in the earth? I think we are. Then let us take thought, and consider; let us give heed to the word preached unto us; and being convinced that these gifts are by Christian baptism sealed to the Church, let us seek for them, let us pray for their revival, let us stir them up in one another, let us contend for them earnestly, and not yield them into the hands of the mockers and the revilers. Oh no! it is no light matter, to be lightly dealt with. I have felt bound in spirit till I should find an opportunity of setting forth these things to the Church; and having now found it, in the regular course of these lectures, I rejoice; and shall now retire, with the impressions made upon my mind, to wait upon the Lord, till he shall awaken in the Church committed to my charge these precious things, of which we have long lost the use, and even the knowledge.

By means of the preceding digression we have come to distinct conclusions concerning the Church, as it was constituted and left by Christ to continue till He should come again. We have ascertained, that to the constitution of the Church two things must co-exist: first, the holiness of the regenerate man, expressing itself in one faith, one hope, one love, one spirit; secondly, the peculiar and proper gift of the Holy Ghost unto every member, to place him in his proper office in the body, and to enable him, by his diligent use thereof, to contribute his part unto the edification of the whole. There is no doubt, that of this charge or burden, which we received in trust from the Lord, and were commanded to hold fast till He come, a very poor and pitiful fragment is that which remaineth; and the sorest affliction of all is, that there is no shame nor contrition in the heart of the Church for her miserable neglect of the gift that is in her, for her sad dereliction of the high and honourable office whereto she

was called. Instead of mourning in sackcloth and in ashes over the ruins of the temple of the Holy Ghost, which she is become; instead of setting herself, like Nehemiah, stoutly to the work of repairing the wall of the city, and setting up the gates with their locks and bars; we are more, like Sanballat and the Horonites, who resisted the work of re-edifying Jerusalem, and by their interference delayed its accomplishment. If we speak of perfect holiness in the flesh, they make an outcry for imperfection and indwelling sin; as if God had not sought, or seeking had not prevailed, to sanctify our nature, as it is found by us all under the fallen condition of sin and death. If we speak of presenting body, soul, and spirit an acceptable offering unto God, and proving what is the perfect will of God, they raise an outcry about original sin and abiding corruption: as if God's glory stood in being defeated and overcome, as if Christ's work stood in being holy Himself but not suffering any of His members to be likewise holy. If we take liberty to speak of baptism as the slaying and burying of the flesh, and the quickening of the Spirit to prevail over it, in all ways and at all times, so as that we should ever be in the Spirit and never in the flesh; they admit that this is what shall be at the resurrection of the just: but that it is what should be now, and what every baptized man is bound and enabled to be, they much object: and by their much objecting keep the Church in this twilight ignorance, in this mixture of worldliness, in this satisfaction with unholiness, in which she is everywhere found. The idea of perfection in the flesh and in the world is held to be a false idea; the hope of it a fallacious hope; the desire of it, deceit and disappointment to all. I lift up my voice against this, as the sanctification of wickedness, as the inlet of all immorality, as the denial of God's supremacy over man, as the rejection of the work of Christ in flesh, and the defiance of the Holy Ghost's power to cleanse the conscience from dead works, and give it a continual good answer towards God. Nor is it any matter to me how much this doctrine may be, and has been, abused, both by the Papists and the Methodists, to attribute merit unto the creature, and puff him up with vain conceit: it is not liable to such abuse in the hands of those who understand that it is not they, but Christ in them, who maketh them to cease from sin; and that the glory of all such righteousness as we are enabled to work is due to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name and into whose power we were baptized: and I do call upon every baptized person, upon every member of the Church of Christ; I do most solemnly call, to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord," to "be holy as He is holy, and perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect." I call upon every man who is born of

God to cease from sin, and to know the meaning of such language as this: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death:". "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not:" "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." They talk of the peculiar gifts of the Holy Ghost as having been withdrawn from the Church; but they might as well talk of the common gift of love and holiness having been withdrawn, for the one seems to me almost as much gone out of sight as doth the other. Nay; but if, as we must all allow, the peculiar gifts of the Spirit have in a great degree ceased to be visible, it is because the unfaithful servants did not trade with them for the Master's interest, which is the Church's commonweal; and so, from defect of that love and holiness, which is the bond of the body, the common possession of all, it hath come to pass that we are so cut short in our peculiar property; yea, therefore it is, because we have been of a selfish and churlish spirit, that we have hidden our talent in a napkin, or in the earth. But it is our doing and not His. He is not yet come to reckon with us, and to say of the unfaithful and wicked, "Take his talent from him." The talent is still there, thou sluggard! go, dig it up out of the ground, where thou hast concealed it; go, trade with it, and lay it out; that thy Lord may receive His own with usury. Oh! I warn all, with whom my word hath any weight, to abjure the unscriptural, the false opinion, in the arms of which the multitude lie locked, that God hath withdrawn any gift from His Church. The time of reckoning is not yet come, blessed be His name! the Merchantman is not yet returned from the far country: make haste, consider the gift He bequeathed to you, examine the state of your accounts, and make ready; for the reckoning is at hand. I rede you, brethren, beware of false doctrine, where false doctrine must be attended with such fatal consequence. The command of our text is steadfast and uncompromising, "That which thou hast hold fast till I come;" and in the next Epistle, "Strengthen the things that remain." I call upon you to follow after charity, and to desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy. I call upon you to covet earnestly the best gifts. I would that you all spake with tongues, I would that ye did all prophesy, I would that ye were zealous of spiritual gifts, and that ye sought to excel to the edifying of the Church; and in thus wishing, I use the language of the apostle of the Gentiles, who breathed these desires of his heart over the Corinthian Church. I earnestly beseech you to consider your baptismal obligation; I earnestly beseech you to render an account of that gift of the Holy Ghost, into the promise of which ye were baptized. Re-examine

that tradition of men, that God intended miracles, or gifts of the Holy Ghost, to continue only for a time. It is as great a falsehood as that he intended Adam to stand in innocency only for a time; and Adam might as well justify his fall by turning upon God and saying, "Thou didst no otherwise intend but that fall I should," as we justify our loss of the Church's primitive glory by saying, "God intended that it should only last for a while, and then be lost for ever." The Jews might as well be proud and hard-hearted under their present dispensation and degradation, and say, "For God intended, and had written it in the Prophets;" and Rome, that mother of harlots, might as well justify her apostasy by saying, that "God intended it; for is it not all written in the Apocalypse?" as we, cold, lukewarm Protestants, having a name only to live, may pretend to justify our present nakedness, and blindness, and meanness, and evil hearts of unbelief, and spiritual voidness, and pride of ignorance, and boasting in our shame, by saying, "God intended it; is it not written in the account of the Church of Sardis and the Church of Thyatira?" I seek strong words and mighty words. I would bring my blow as with a forge-hammer to break the rock in pieces. I will keep no terms, I will make no truce with the spirit that is now reigning in the Church. If they will set themselves against the Church of God, I will set myself against them, and fight it out unto the last; but not with their weapons of falsehood, of ridicule, of contempt, of railing, and of revenge, but with the weapons of the truth,—with the shield of faith, which is able to quench their fiery darts; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is quick and powerful; and with feet shod for strength and keeping ground with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

III.—THE PROMISE TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," (Rev. ii. 26–29.) This Epistle might, we have said, be well entitled "Of Works;" and as such we have treated it, introducing into this lecture whatever we had to say concerning the works of the Church. That digression into which we entered, for showing out of the Holy Scriptures what were the works proper to the Christian Church in the primitive time, would have been proper in no epistle but this to the Church of Thyatira. As our matter concerning Church government properly arranged itself

under the first epistle, where Christ presenteth himself as the head Bishop walking amongst the churches; and our matter concerning suffering under persecution arranged itself under the second epistle, unto Smyrna, where Christ presenteth Himself as the vanquisher of death; and our matter concerning the false prophets and doctrines, under the epistle to Pergamos, where Christ presents Himself as the pruner of the exuberances, and the cutter-off of the fruitless branches of His vine; so our matter concerning works, as distinguished from love, the inward principle, doth properly arrange itself under this epistle to Thyatira, where Christ is presented as the workman of His Church, with His feet like unto fine brass. Now, in confirmation of this arrangement of our matter, it is remarkable, that to the words "he that overcometh," which are common to all the epistles, there should be added these words, "and keepeth my works unto the end," which are found in none other, nor any other answering to them. It is a peculiarity of this epistle to put in two conditions necessary to the possession of the promise, of which the first is, that we "shall overcome;" and the second, that "we shall keep Christ's works unto the end." This new condition, therefore, is well worthy of our attention. It consisteth of two parts: the first being the subject, *my works;* the second being the action, keeping them unto the end. Now I think there is a special emphasis to be put upon the word *my*, in the subject: "my works," to distinguish them from the works of Jezebel, the mother of lies and of the abominations of the earth, which were leading astray many from the right way of good works. To put the Church upon her guard against a multitude of false works—such as penances and pilgrimages, and lying signs and wonders, and bodily inflictions, and the various formularies of the religious orders, and the keeping of saints' days, and the observing of times and seasons, and that multitude of impositions which were invented by the sorceress—Christ, in writing of works, and presenting the proper and particular reward of works, doth entitle them "my works," to signify that those divine, moral, and spiritual workings which He went about continually performing, should inherit the reward. These words, "my works," stand in contrast with the words "their works," of which in this book they are called upon to repent. If, now, we would know what these works of their wickedness were, we have them enumerated in the 9th chapter, vers. 20 and 21: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of

their fornication, nor of their thefts." And again, when the mother of harlots, Babylon the great—the same with the Jezebel in this epistle—comes to receive her judgment, it is in these words, "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double," (Rev. xviii. 6.) Also, when the Church, having painfully endured unto the end, is about to be rewarded, it is in these words: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them," (Rev. xiv. 13.) In the general judgment, when the dead are raised and the books opened, the general assize is holden upon their works: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works," (Rev. xx. 12.) Seeing, then, the Church was to be assailed with temptations of Satan in the shape of good works, and seeing that the judgment would be decided by works, it was both a wise and a gracious thing on the part of our Lord to set forth in this conspicuous way the necessity of discriminating well between His works and the works of the adulteress. What His works are, we have set forth at large in the digression; and now it behoves us to set forth in contrast with them what her works are. They are enumerated, in the verses above cited from the 9th chapter. First, the worship of devils or demons; which had likewise been foretold in the First Epistle to Timothy, chap. iv. ver. 1. These demons, whom they worshipped, are the spirits of departed men exalted into the degree of gods. As in the ancient idolatry, referred to by the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 20, 21, the objects of their worship were the spirits of departed men, as Jupiter, Bacchus, Hercules, &c.; so in the Papal Church, the objects of their worship are demons, or the spirits of departed men, as St Augustine, St Paul, St Peter, and the rest of their saints. Now Christ's work was to worship and glorify the Father: "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do:" but the work of these Romanists is to glorify the name of St Francis, St Benedict, St Augustine, and the heads of their several orders. Their works they do, their canons they keep, their appointed service they perform. It is not Christ, but St Dominic; it is not the commandments of Christ, but the traditions of St Dominic. And as it is with the monks, that the eternal laws of divine morality should give way and be entirely forgotten before the discipline of their human master, so with the people, who addict themselves to their tutelary saints, and bestow upon them the wor-

ship which is due unto God only. It is as complete a system of demon worship, this Papacy, as ever was the paganism of Greece and Rome, as is the polytheism of China or Hindostan.—Secondly, Their works consist in the worship of "idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk." And how true this is of that sorceress in the Church, pass over and behold. Go into their churches, whose doors are ever open for such market-making; nay, stand at the corners of their streets, beside some image of the Virgin or the saints; or be in attendance at the village festival given in honour of their tutelary god; and you will see what worship there is of idols of every material. They say it is not the wooden thing, of the stock and stone: I say it is, in almost every case, even with the priests themselves, unless they be infidels at heart; or else what is the meaning of crying up this image, and that relic, by recounting the false miracles which they have wrought? or what is the meaning of persuading the people, as you find it in all Roman Catholic countries, that this image of the Virgin is good for the cure of this disease, and that image for another? It is as complete a system of stock and stone worship as ever was established at Babylon. But is not the word of God against an idol, use it and understand it how ye may? Against this the Second Commandment is directed; and let a man use an idol in worship as he pleases, he breaks the commandment of God. The third of their works is their "murders," that is, their martyrdoms of the saints of God: "In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." These murders now proceed in secret, in the prisons of the inquisition, in the dungeons of the priest-ridden tyrants; but that they are at this hour proceeding, and will proceed until her judgment is consummated, I well believe. The fourth is their "sorceries." Those works which they have power to do through the help of the devil and his angels; those cunning devices which, taught of the devil, they are skilful to palm upon the people as works of Christ in His Church; those curses and maledictions which are practised daily upon the over-credulous people; their dealings with purgatory, their masses for the dead, their damnable traffic with the spiritual world, whereby they make merchandise of the souls of men—these, all these, constitute their sorceries. And then comes their "fornication," which is their giving themselves up to the kings of the earth, and bringing the Church into bondage of the elements of the world. Instead of keeping her spiritual separateness for Christ, her only husband, she gives herself to the kings of the earth, who serve themselves of her, and are by her brought into bondage. Her pandering to tyranny, her making common cause with

oppression, her building of her house with blood of widows and of orphans, pillaged by ruthless kings: this is her fornication: "And all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornications, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her." And lastly, there is her "thefts;" her deception, her cunning inventions to pillage men of their substance. Wretched strumpet! her purple and her scarlet raiment are all stolen and filched from the terrors of the people; her gold, and her precious stones, and her pearls are the plunder of a deluded world. Abandoned Church! thy cathedral, thy shrine, thy splendours, are thy disgrace, the hires of thy lewdness, which thou carriest and exposest before thee, thou vile and wretched woman! But thou shalt be stripped bare and naked: they shall "hate thee, and make thee desolate and naked, and eat thy flesh, and burn thee with fire." Thou shalt be brought to depend upon day's wages. In the kingdom of thy first-born son thou art already so dishonoured. They pay thee; thou hast nothing of thine own; thou art a hanger-on of these deputies of the people. They pay thee: thou wilt soon become a beggar, and have to ask alms; and they will beat thee from door to door, until thou expire in the streets, like an abandoned shameless strumpet as thou art. I hail the day; it is near for to come. The evil character of these works consisteth in this, that they should be done in the name of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ; that they should assume the character of religion, and be undertaken for the kingdom of heaven's sake. That wickedness should reign in the world, the law teacheth us to expect; but that it should clothe itself with the raiment of Christian faith, hope, and charity, and so bring the holy and the unholy into confusion, is what vexeth and grieveth the Lord at His heart. This brought on the deluge, the admixture of the sons of God with the daughters of men; it brought on the downfall of Jerusalem; and it is fast breaking up a Christian Church. The Lord, foreseeing what a system of sanctified wickedness was to be propagated in His name, is at pains in this epistle to limit the Church to the observance of His own commandments, to the keeping of His own works, in opposition to all innovations and inventions of men.

There is a chapter in Isaiah so intimately connected with all that is said of Jezebel and her works, and of Babylon the mother of harlots, and of the bed into which she and her paramour shall be cast, that I cannot pass on without noticing it, however briefly. It is the 57th of that prophet, beginning with a lamentation over the perishing of the righteous man, and removal of the merciful man from the evil to come: of whom it is said, that he entereth into

peace, "and they rest in their beds, walking in his uprightness." This description of Christ and of His disciples, of their experience of evil on the earth, and their transition from greater evil into the peace and joy of their Lord, being given, the prophet addresseth another company, whom he denominates "Sons of the sorceress, seed of the adulterer and the whore;" whose doings are enumerated; their swelling words of vanity and blasphemy, their false accusations of the righteous; for which they are entitled "children of transgression, seed of falsehood." Then comes a reproof of their idolatry, Druidical, "among the oaks;" and of bloody Moloch, and other superstitions; mocking God and vexing Him, as if He could receive comfort in these things. Then cometh her fornication, written in language parallel with that used of Jezebel and her children; wherein the bed, which we found it hard to interpret, is more than once mentioned, and connected with hell in a way which confirms the conjecture which we threw out above. "And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell," (Isa. lvii. 9.) I am confirmed the more in my opinion that the bed to which Jezebel is doomed signifies hell, not only by the parallelism with this passage, but also by the contrast with the first two verses, where the reward of the righteous in heaven is called "resting in their beds." Observe, finally, in order to be satisfied that our Lord in inditing this epistle had respect to the passage in Isaiah, how the threatening and the promise in both correspond with one another: "I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee. When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them; but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain." The sorceress and her children have a righteousness and works, but they profit her not. She hath companies, but they deliver her not. She is carried away by the wind, like the dust of the summer threshing-floor; but the righteous possess the land, and inherit the temple of God: even as in the promise to the Church of Thyatira, they trample the nations under foot, and receive the inheritance which Christ received from His Father, as it is written in the Second Psalm. And they likewise receive the morning star; which, as we shall see, is the returning cloud of the glorious God, the shechinah coming up from the east to glorify the temple of Mount Zion. (Ezek. xliii. 2.) So that I feel an assurance that there is a designed and well-continued parallelism between this part of our epistle and the 57th chapter of Isaiah.

So much for the works of the sorceress, as distinguished from the

works of Christ. And now let us proceed to the second part of this condition of the promise, which is, that we "keep Christ's works unto the end."—The works of Christ were twofold,—works of holiness, and works of power; or, if we would include them under one class, works of goodness. To do the like, and even greater, He promised as the endowment of every one who believeth upon Him. I find Christ's works, in the language of the New Testament, to include His works miraculous as well as His works moral; nor can I understand by what authority we exclude them. If I err not, when Christ appealed to His works in such expressions as these, "The works which I do," He commonly means His works of healing, casting out of devils, and the like, which are promised to follow him that believeth. These also were moral works—they were good works; and by this, their moral character, rather than by their power, were they a test and proof of His heavenly mission: "The works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." I nothing doubt that these works of the Spirit, which Christ wrought in the sight of men, we were commanded to keep; and for not having kept are much to be blamed. Hear how the abstract of His life and doings is given by Peter to Cornelius and his company: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem," (Acts x. 38, 39.) While this I maintain, I know that the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith, are not to be left undone; that the doing of the commandments of Christ is the only true test of loving Him; that the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: all which I most willingly include amongst the works of Christ which we were commanded to keep unto the end. But the former are not to be neglected; and because they have been neglected, I am the more instant in seeking to reclaim and recover them. The more also in this place do I insist upon them, because they stand in opposition to the works of the sorceress, which by no means excludes this department, but hath made them chief in building up her Babel of iniquity. Whereon rest the claims of her saints, but upon the miracles which they and their relics have done? Whereon rest the pretensions of their idols, but upon the cures which they have wrought? Whereon resteth the authority of these doctrines of devils which they teach, but on the signs and

wonders which they assert do follow the preachers of them? And forasmuch as upon this, as its foundation, Jezebel and her false prophets rest their house of wickedness, our Lord Jesus Christ did wish and intend, and in this passage I think doth command, that His true body should put to shame all these lying wonders; as Moses and Aaron did Jannes and Jambres, as Peter did Simon Magus, and Paul did Elymas the sorcerer. But, instead of this, we have given up the weapon of the Lord, wherewith to uproot that foundation; have forgotten and denied this manner of testimony altogether; and left the field open for their deceptions, and exposed ourselves to the invasion of infidelity. But the appeal will soon, even amongst ourselves, have to be made to God again. There is a pitch of hypocrisy and dishonesty and subtlety to which the minds of men may at length arrive, when a book like the Bible, which addresses itself to honest, downright, plain, simple men, hath no effect whatever. I have no doubt that the Protestant Church, especially what is called the Religious World, are come into this condition. Oft have I declared it, and I now with sorrow publish the declaration, that those they call Evangelical, and Protestants in general, are no longer able to be convinced out of the Scriptures. Creeds, and confessions, and catechisms, have still some hold of them; the magazines and religious newspapers still more; the writings and sayings of their favourite ministers still more; but as to the Bible, save for furnishing a few offensive and defensive texts, it might as well be closed and sealed up. And I for one feel, that of all things the most difficult is to make any way in convincing men out of the Scriptures; which are so honest-hearted and outspoken, that a man with partialities and hypocrisies cannot gather their meaning upon any subject; and so I feel assured, that God will, as in the days of Elias, dispute with the false prophets by appeals unto the senses of this perverse and crooked generation. I believe, that against the Romanists, who have Satan's works; and against the disciples of that Jezebel of our time, Joanna Southcote, who also have Satan's works; and against the worldly and intellectual of all denominations, who scorn to hear of miraculous works at all; God will contend for His faithful Church, for the true disciples of His Son, by enabling them first to receive the faith, and secondly, to regain the power, of working the works which Christ also wrought, and greater works than these: and in keeping these words to the end will consist no mean part of the trial and of the victory of His people. If infidelity be the ruling passion of the times, then the belief in the supernatural, and the claim to the supernatural, must be the ruling scandal of the times. It is, in truth, casting down the

gauntlet against their ingenious argumentations and disquisitions, both for and against the Christian religion. It is shifting away into the background all their learning and scholarship and pride of controversy, for a poor artisan and a silly maid to come forward and do the works which Christ did, and greater works than these. Ah me! how the young and the old, the honoured champions of the faith and the stripling soldier just entering into the fight, and all the infidels against whom they contend—how both will join in contempt and persecution of the little flock unto whom it shall please the Lord to reveal Himself, as heretofore He was wont in the Church of Corinth! I see, while I write these things, the storm of war gathering around them: I see their hope all but gone: I see them like to be swallowed up of their enemy; and then I see them escaped, like a bird out of the fowler's snare; caught away from the evil to come; resting in their beds, and coming with a two-edged sword to execute vengeance on the heathen; "to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints," (Ps. cxlix. 7–9.)

We now come to the promise itself, which consisteth of two parts: First, power over the nations; Secondly, the morning star. With respect to the former, of what kind, and for what ends, is declared in the 27th verse, "And ye shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father." It is power to judge, and to make war, and to cast down, and to destroy for ever; in what manner is described in the last half of the 19th chapter, where the saints come out of heaven along with Christ, to "smite the nations, and to rule them with a rod of iron."—The words, "even as I received of my Father," refer us to the Second Psalm, where the Son cometh in the plenitude of His power to execute the judgment written against the nations of the earth; wherein He promiseth that every faithful and true disciple shall take with Him a part. The power, therefore, promised in the text, is, I think, not to be regarded as the power of peaceful government, which during the thousand years these same faithful servants of the Lord shall exercise, but the power of destroying from the earth those who have so long destroyed its peace, and are now confederate against the Lord and His Anointed. Power it is to execute the judgment which is written; power it is to vindicate the cause of God and of godliness; power it is to wrest the earth, and the dwellers there, out of the hand of the usurper, into the hands of its Redeemer and Lord, Christ Jesus. Power of battle,

power of victory, power of treading under foot, power of casting out, power of binding, power of destroying every wicked thing from the face of the earth. That the nations and kingdoms of this earth are to grow worse and worse, as did the antediluvians, until the Lord shall be weary of forbearing, when He shall bring upon them swift judgment, as He brought in the days of Noah and of Lot, all Scripture consenteth, and in every form and by every means doth direct the eye of the Church unto that great and terrible day of the Lord, when her enemies shall be destroyed from the face of the earth. This day is called in Scripture by various names, as "the day of the Lord," "the day of perdition of ungodly men," "the day of wrath," "the day of judgment." In the Old Testament the Jews have a great hand in this destruction of nations, "as a fire amongst wood, as a lion amongst the flock," is Jacob described in that day amongst the nations: "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs be red through the same." And "Jerusalem is a troublous stone, upon which the nations fall and are broken." And in all parts of the Old Testament it is written that God will use the tribes of Israel, in that day, as His battle-axe and weapons of war. Not so the mystery of the saints under the New Testament, who are baptized into the spiritual out of the carnal. Theirs, indeed, also, is the promise of power to judge and to make war, as in the text before us; but not with an arm of flesh, nor with a carnal weapon. How then? To answer this question it is necessary first to have explained the second part of the promise: "I will give him the morning star." This being interpreted, will explain to us the manner in which Christ and His saints are to "rule the nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." But, lest any one should suppose that the gift of the morning star, from being mentioned after the destruction of the nations, should be understood of something posterior thereto, we observe that the 27th verse is to be taken in a parenthesis, explanatory of the nature of the power which the saints are to exercise, and as a note of reference to the Second Psalm for further information. The promise is simply in these words, "I will give him power over the nations, and I will give him the morning star." The rest is but, as it were, a note of explanation.

Let us then examine what is meant by giving the morning star; and thus we shall be able to explain what part the saints gathered and to be gathered into glory shall take in the destruction of the nations. What this morning star is, Christ himself declareth in this book (xxii. 16): "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." Every reference to David bespeaks

Christ the King, Christ the Man of War, Christ the subduer of all His enemies round about; but not Christ the Builder of the temple, or the Prince of peace, which to typify was reserved for Solomon, as we have set forth in the beginning of this lecture. When Christ comes to claim the earth, and to wrench open the clasps of the book of the inheritance, His recognisances are these; "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," (ver. 5 :) and when He offereth Himself to the Church in Philadelphia, it is in the character of Him who hath the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth: might and strength—masterful might, indomitable strength—are therefore what is manifestly intended when Christ chooseth to take to Himself the symbols of David. Now in the text referred to, He calleth Himself "the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." These two names are not in the original connected with the copulative conjunction "and," but stand in opposition the one to the other, and therefore, in strictness of interpretation, ought to be taken as explanatory the one of the other. If then the symbols of David are proper to Him as the Avenger of Israel's wrongs upon her enemies, as the Captor of Jerusalem and Mount Zion, as the Ransomer with the sword of the promised inheritance; then the Morning Star should signify something of the same kind, should represent Christ as a subverter of the wicked, and an establisher of the righteous upon the earth for ever and ever. But the text before us will guide us no further; and, if we would come to more close definition, we must rest upon some other text of Scripture. Balaam's famous prophecy in the 24th of Numbers is the key to the whole subject, when he undertaketh, before departing unto Balak, to advertise him "what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days." It is as follows: "He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High; which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh," (vers. 16, 17.) Here the vision is declared to be of the Almighty, whom Balaam should see, but not now—in the latter day, when Job, another kind of man, declared that he should see Him on the earth. Then Balaam proceeds to describe His glorious coming: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly," (vers. 17, 18.) The ancient Jewish interpreters, as well as the Christian Fathers, saw Messiah rather than David in this prophecy, though doubtless David gave it partial accomplishment in the type, as Christ will give

it complete accomplishment in the antitype. And by the words, "destroying all the children of Sheth," they understand ruling over all the children of men. But I rather incline to understand by it the same mystery which is expressed in our text by smiting the nations with a rod of iron, and breaking them in pieces like a potter's vessel; and this work of destruction accomplished, then comes in the prophecy of Balaam, the blessed dominion: "Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city," (ver. 19.) Much more is contained in Balaam's prophecy; but it is sufficient for our present purpose to have clearly ascertained that the star symbolises power putting itself forth in destruction. If anything were wanting to convince us of this, it is given to us in Balaam's own exclamation, "Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" By this prophecy, therefore, we are confirmed in our conclusion, that the symbol of the star, like the symbol of David, implies destruction and desolation unto the earth and its people. So much were the Jews built up in the faith of this prophecy, that the impostor who arose in the time of Adrian and drew the whole remnant of the Jewish people into miserable revolt, had nothing else to build upon than the name and title which he assumed to himself, but Barcochebas, or the son of a star, in allusion to this prophecy. It is, however, a symbol of but rare occurrence in the prophets; once, indeed, it is used by the prophet Isaiah (xiv. 12,) of the personal Antichrist—the antitype of the Assyrian, who fell with such miserable ruin from his high estate by the destruction of his veteran army under the walls of Jerusalem: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (day-star) son of the morning! how art thou cast down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit," (Isa. xiv. 12–15.) This most remarkable passage bespeaks one yet to arise in the latter days, "who shall exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." When this wicked one shall be revealed he shall claim to himself the high honours which belong to Christ,—the day-star, the true Lucifer or son of the morning,—whose actions, therefore, in this character, may be gathered from the pretensions of the false Lucifer, day-star, or son of the morning. These are first to weaken the nations with his perpetual stroke, and to make the world a wilderness; which accordingly Christ effecteth when He becomes the refuge of Jacob, as it is written in the 45th Psalm: "Come, be-

hold the work of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." The second assumption of the personal antichrist, the Assyrian of the latter days, is, ascension into heaven, and exaltation of his throne above the stars of God; that is, the fixed dynasties of heaven. This Christ hath received when He was taken up on high —principalities, and powers, and dominions being made subject to Him. The third assumption upon the divine prerogative of Christ which the last antichrist maketh, is, "to sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north;" that is, to possess Mount "Zion, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, on the sides of the north of the city of the great King," which also Christ received in the day of His resurrection, as it is written in the Second Psalm, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." And the last of the blasphemous claims of the god-like deceiver is, that he would be like the Most High who reigneth in heaven, above the clouds; which dignity belongeth only to Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God. These glorious attributes, therefore, belong to Christ in His character of the Bright and Morning Star, to smite the nations, to rule over the principalities of heaven, to dwell in Mount Zion, thence giving law to the world, and to be the very likeness of God. The most ambitious and glorious of mankind, who, through the instigation of Satan, is to crown himself with these the honours of Messiah's kingdom, we are told shall be consumed by the breath of Messiah's mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His coming. He shall think that he hath obtained the dominion, and already holdeth the world in hand, when "tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him," (Dan. xi. 44, 45.) Then shall stand up against him the true Messiah, "Michael, the great Prince, which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." But above all these stars He shall shine most conspicuous who is the Bright and the Morning Star. At the time that the last head of Edom shall arise and think himself the first-born of men, our Jacob, the supplanter, shall come, with the

generation of those that seek His face, and cast him out from the mount of the congregation, and call upon the gates of the temple to be lifted up, the doors to be unbarred, that the King of glory and the Lord of the hosts of the righteous may enter into them, as it is written in the 24th Psalm.

Besides these notices concerning the meaning of the Morning Star, which are to be extracted from the Old Testament, there are two in the New Testament, to which we would now attend. The first is the appearance of the star at the time of His birth, which brought the wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews; for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him?" Who or what these wise men were, is left to conjecture: and certainly the best conjecture appears to me, that they were of the tribes of Israel scattered abroad. For what other people so interested in Messiah, or to whom else, had the Lord promised to manifest Himself? The distance from which they came, supposing the star to have appeared on His birth, being a journey of two years or thereabouts, argues that they must have come from beyond the bounds of the then civilised world, out of which the Ten Tribes of Israel were cast. Whosoever they were, they must either have known from the prophecy of Balaam that the star did betoken the King of the Jews, or it must have been revealed to them by the Lord. Herod's perplexity upon hearing their mission I attribute very much to the language in which Balaam prophesied of Him, who was at once the "Star out of Jacob, and the Sceptre of Israel;" a King of the Jews symbolised by a star. He knew that for him and for the kings of the earth there was no hope when this Star and Sceptre should appear; and therefore he both dissembled with the wise men and took measures to destroy the Infant's life. Thus did God, at the birth of Christ, concern Himself to prove Him not only offspring of David, in being born in Beth-lehem, David's city, but also Star of Jacob, by bringing up the star out of the East, till it rested over where the young child was. And these representatives of the Ten Tribes, if I am right, paid homage to Him, and presented Him such tribute as should be offered to a king, as king Solomon was wont to receive. Also in the consternation of king Herod and his court, God gave a sign of that consternation which shall yet blaze forth upon kings against the appearance of the Star of Jacob; and withal, Christ being thus crowned and proclaimed King of the Jews by a star in heaven, a bright messenger of God, and dying with that good confession upon His lips before Pontius Pilate, and that superscription written over His cross, doth evince that the symbol of the star hath relation to Him

not only as a King in general, but as the King of the Jews in particular; and that the mighty acts which He is to do as the Star of Jacob shall be done in revenge of His people's wrongs, in vindication of His people's rights.

The other passage in the New Testament to which I refer for the exposition of this symbol is in 2 Pet. i., where the apostle, as we have explained already in these lectures, produces the transfiguration upon Mount Tabor as a proof that all the prophets had spoken, concerning the coming glory of Christ, would certainly be accomplished. The voice which came from the excellent glory of the Father upon the glorified Son of man, the apostle regardeth as a new confirmation of all the prophets; and therefore he the more earnestly entreats them to give heed to the prophets, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise on their hearts. Here again the day-star is mentioned in connexion with the dawning of a future day, until which, the only light the Church possesseth is the light of all the prophets concerning Christ's appearing, confirmed as it was by the foreshowing of that appearance on the holy mount. The thing, therefore, which was shown on the holy mount is beyond a question that to which He directs the hope of the Church as the consummation of all the prophets, as the dawning of the day, and the rising of the day-star on the heart. The only subject of discourse before the apostles is the coming again of Jesus in power and majesty, ver. 16. This, he says, they had a real manifestation of on the mount: therefore the prophets are more to be believed, and we Christians ought to give the more heed to them, till that glorious hope and appearing of the Lord Jesus be manifested to the heart-felt glory of His people. The world till then is represented as in darkness, the prophets as our lamp in the night, the coming of the Lord as the rising of the day-star in the dawn of the morning, and the hearts of His people, downcast till then, transported with joy and filled with gladness when that blessed dawn doth appear; and thus have we all the matter which I know of in the Scriptures for the interpretation of the promise in the text, "I will give Him the Morning Star." Let us now endeavour to gather the interpretation.

The promise must contain in it these things: a share in the glorious advent of Christ, and a share in the action of smiting the nations and planting His people, which He is then to perform; a share of His royal name, the Star of Jacob, the Sceptre of Israel, the King of the Jews; a share of the honour and majesty which was put upon Him when the Father welcomed Him as His Son into the cloud of His excellent glory, into which He took not Christ only,

but likewise those two, Moses and Elias, partakers of His brightness, but likewise His apostles Peter, James, and John, who felt it good to be there.—But now the question ariseth, How is it possible that we, who are laid in the grave, can be partakers of that manifestation of glory and action of mighty power? The answer is, By the first resurrection, and not otherwise, which shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His glorious body. But what connexion hath the first resurrection with the Morning Star? This connexion it holdeth not so much with the star, which indicates dignity and power, but with the *morning*, with which the resurrection of the saints is in all Scripture contemporaneous. If we shall be able to show that in the Scriptures the action of the morning is the resurrection of the saints, then the interpretation will be complete; and the promise will amount to this,—To him that overcometh I will give power over the nations, by raising him from the grave into the dignity of my name, the Star of Jacob, and to perform with me the action of delivering Israel out of the hand of his enemies, which, like the dawn, shall bring in the glorious day of the world's redemption. Let us then bring our proofs from Scripture that the action of the morning is the resurrection of the saints to power and glory. Amongst the many testimonies to this effect, we must select a few of the most distinct. The first is Ps. xlix., where, after introducing the subject with wonderful language bespeaking its high importance, the Psalmist setteth forth the folly of worldly men in living here as if there were no hereafter, and keeping to themselves wealth as if it could redeem their life, and setting their affections upon their houses and lands as if they should inherit them for ever; then he thus expresseth their eternal disappointment and disgrace, (vers. 14, 15): "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me." Here "the morning" is fixed upon as the time when upright men shall have the dominion over the wicked, by being redeemed from the hand of hell, and received unto Him who hath the dominion to bestow,—that is, unto Christ, who hath received it from His Father. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the day of the resurrection of the righteous, when they have dominion and inherit the earth, is denominated the morning, whose light it is said, ver. 19, the wicked shall never see. The 110th Psalm is another whose testimony is to the same effect, where the powerful act of Christ to subdue His enemies is described as being helped by His people; of whom it is said, ver. 3, that "they shall be willing in the day of

thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." Here the day of His power, and the womb of the morning, and the willingness of His people, and the beauties of their holiness, and the destruction of the enemies of the King, are all at one and the same time. The 46th Psalm, which setteth forth the distress and the deliverance of the Church, doth declare that her help shall come in the morning, for then the nations shall be removed. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her when the morning appeareth (marg.) The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted." For illustrations of the same truth, I refer to the 30th Psalm, ver. 5, and to the 59th Psalm, ver. 14–16; and I may observe that the most learned critic of the last age gives it as his judgment, that in the Psalms the morning always referreth to the first resurrection. It is the time when God awaketh, when Christ ariseth out of His place, when the Church awaketh, and beholdeth His face in righteousness, and is satisfied with His likeness. It was also in the morning watch that the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians and fought against them; and it was early in the morning that the angel of the Lord smote the camp of the Assyrians; and it was very early in the morning that Jesus arose, the first-fruits of them that slept.

There is another mark by which the first resurrection is connected with the morning, namely, the dew; as in the 110th Psalm, and in the 26th chapter of Isaiah, ver. 19, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." The dew is deposited in greatest plenty about the breaking of the dawn, and refresheth with its numerous drops the leaves, and plants, and blades of grass on which it resteth; so shall the saints of God, coming forth from their invisible abodes out of the womb of the morning, refresh the world with their benignant influence; and therefore are they likened to the dew, for all nature is so constituted of God as to bear witness of that day of regeneration which then shall dawn. And as the morning star looking forth from its lonely house in the heavens, when all the rest are faded and gone, and ere yet the streak of dawn hath appeared, may fitly be regarded as the ruler of that hour when the dew refresheth the earth; so Christ, who shall come like a thief and steal upon the world, locked in the arms of sleep, and gather His own from the four winds of heaven, with whose hosts He shall put to flight the rulers of the darkness of this world, and bring in the times of refreshing, is aptly compared to

the morning star, which scattereth the darkness of night, and ushereth in the dawn of the morning.

There is still another point which we would endeavour to make good, and so complete this interpretation;—that as the New Jerusalem, when it shall come down from heaven, is the sun of this world, in the light of which the nations walk, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; so the re-appearance of the glorious cloud wherein God hath ever dwelt, in light inaccessible and full of glory, is the star of the morning, and the sign of the Son of man's appearing. When it is said, in the prophet Daniel, that the Son of man shall come with the clouds of heaven, and repeated by himself in the 24th of Matthew and other parts of Scripture, I do not understand those watery clouds which gather in the lower parts of the air to be signified, but that cloud of darkness and of brightness—pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night—wherein Jehovah, in times past, appeared for the deliverance of His people, and guided them through the wilderness, riding upon the heavens; which afterwards dwelt in the innermost recesses of the tabernacle; which filled the temple on the day of its dedication, nor forsook it until God had taken testimony, by the mouth of Ezekiel, to all the idolatries with which they had polluted His house, and given assurance, by the mouth of the same prophet, that it should not always be separated from men, but should come again and fill the temple with its glory, (Ezek. xliii. 2; Haggai ii. 7, 9.) That cloud, the ancient dwelling-place of power and glory, and not these watery vapours, is the fit chariot of the Lord, which, on the mount of transfiguration, is called the excellent glory surpassing the brightness of the sun, whence the Father spoke unto the Son of man; in which also the Son of man, clothed in the Father's glory, appeared unto Saul of Tarsus as he journeyed to Damascus, wherein, also, He appeared, as I believe, to the martyr Stephen. That was no ordinary cloud which received Him out of the disciples' sight, when He ascended from the Mount of Olives. It was the old symbol of Jehovah's habitation, receiving into its bosom the Word made flesh, where the Word had ever dwelt before: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with that glory which I had with thee before the world was." And in the like manner in which He had been taken into heaven did the two shining ones say that He should descend from heaven again, or, as He himself saith it, with the Father's glory as well as with His own. He was in His own glory when He stood transfigured on the mount; but He was in the Father's glory also when the glorious cloud had enwrapped Him. When, therefore, in the Gospels it is

said that He shall come in a cloud with power and great glory, (Luke xxi. 27;) and when it is said in the Revelation that He comes sitting on a cloud, that cloud, and no other, is, I believe, signified in which He dwelt of old, when He was the Angel of the Covenant: and He is the Angel of the Covenant still, for the covenant is not yet accomplished. The Jews are all scattered, and Zion sitteth like a widow forlorn. When, therefore, He shall come to perfect His work with the tribes of Israel, He shall come riding on the cloud as in the days of old, even thus as it is written in the 18th and 68th Psalms. But this is only His sign: yet it is a sign at the sight of which the nations well may mourn; for it is the dwelling-place of power, as well as of glory, and as heretofore upon the nations of Canaan it shed baleful beams, fiery lightning, hailstones, and coals of fire, so hereafter shall it empty itself of the wrath of God upon these nations, and that wicked ruler of them, who are gathered to dispute their entrance into the promised inheritance. Peter, in the passage already referred to, calls that the most excellent glory which the three Evangelists denote merely by the name of a cloud; and in all those passages where Christ is said to come with a cloud, or with the clouds, it is always added "with power and glory." Now these watery vapours of the sky, though the sun may paint them in glorious hues, have in themselves neither power nor glory, neither are they capable of sustaining that glory of God in which Christ is to come invested; and into which He is to gather His glorified saints, both dead and living, both raised and changed, who together ascend into the air to meet Him in those clouds of glory, and to be ever with the Lord in the presence of his God. The present glory of Christ standeth in this, that He is admitted into that glorious presence of God where creature never dwelt before. Since sin entered into flesh, God hath shrouded Himself up in a cloud upon the skirts of which Moses might look, but not upon His face as yet; for into that presence flesh and blood shall not enter. God was present with His people under the former dispensation; but all the while He dwelt in a cloud, which took up its secret abode within the veil of the most holy place. The high priest might once a year go into that presence-chamber and look upon that cloudy pavilion; but within the foldings of that cloud man never entered till the Son of man, our High Priest, passed into its heavenly places. All which Moses and the elders, and Israel, and Daniel, and Ezekiel saw, was the glory of the Son of man; and though the skirts of it were cast around Moses, and around the company on the glorious holy mount, who felt it good to be there, still to them, as to Moses, it was not per-

mitted to see God's face and live, but only as it were the train which attended upon Him from behind. But in that light hath our High Priest, the Son of man, dwelt since His ascension into glory, and therein shall we be ushered when we shall be fashioned after the likeness of His glorious body; and thence shall we render Him all those acts of power, and bring those executions of judgment which are written in all the Scriptures, and nowhere more distinctly than in the passage before us. But this veil of the cloud only remaineth upon the glory while the world is in a sinful state, and shall be wholly taken away when the world is purified. And being taken away, what comes forth disclosed? The new Jerusalem, the city of God, the abode of the Lamb and His saints, the head and metropolis of creation, which hath the glory of God, because it hath the Lamb and His bride. As the cloud, I think it is the sign of the Son of man in the heavens; as the new Jerusalem, it is His presence on the earth.

The identity of the Shechinah, or glorious cloud wherein Jehovah dwelt in the Jewish Church, with the sign of the Son of man, is, I think, clearly stated in that discourse of our Lord, constructed on very purpose to answer this question among others, "What is the sign of thy coming?" And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," (Matt. xxiv. 30.) The two parts of this statement I regard as identical with, and intended to explain, each other; the former describing the thing seen by the name of "the sign of his coming," after which the disciples were inquiring, the latter identifying it with the vision of Daniel (ch. vii.) where the Son of man is represented as coming with the clouds of heaven; and both together attributing the distress and mourning and tribulation of the families of the earth to that powerful and glorious appearance. That the thing described in this verse is something prior to Christ's open manifestation in the glory of the new Jerusalem, is clear from the following verse, which describes the gathering of the saints, of whom the new Jerusalem is altogether composed. "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The former verse is the appearance of the morning star; this is the giving of the morning star to all those who have overcome. And not till after every one of the elect hath been thus brought into the presence of His glory, doth He begin to act those direful judgments upon the wicked nations, and upon the polluted elements of nature, which will make the earth to be a fit

habitation for Him and His people. This is the ruling of the nations with a rod of iron, and the breaking of them to pieces as a potter's vessel, of which act of power and holiness we are promised the share; and, this done, the new Jerusalem, the city and tent of God, comes down from heaven, and rests upon the earth for ever. There is a common source of error in thinking that the 30th verse quoted above contains two things, both the sign of Christ's coming and His coming itself. Inasmuch as He is in the sign, He Himself is come when the sign is come; and the sight of the sign is the sight of His coming: and therefore it is said that "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn when they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory." It is not His very personal presentation of Himself upon the earth, the standing of His feet upon the Mount of Olives, the showing of His wounded body to those who pierced it; but it is His appearance in the clouds which strikes terror and brings mourning upon the judged and afflicted nations, because from the fiery cloud will He and His people execute the judgments written against the nations. The question which the disciples put was, "What is the sign of Thy coming?" and this question Jesus addresseth Himself to resolve: and these verses are the resolution of this question, and not of another, "What is Thy coming?" which, He tells in the next two verses, is a thing then very close at hand, but not yet verily present. "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The action which intervenes between the appearance of the sign in the heavens, and the resting of Christ and His saints, and the new Jerusalem, the Father's house upon the earth, is no other than the action of judging the Church and the nations which is described in the 25th chapter. This is done from the cloud in which He comes, and into which His people have been taken; and is the act of power over the nations promised to him that overcometh in the text before us.

Taking the guidance of this passage, let us refer to the 7th chapter of Daniel, and see what light it casts upon this subject. There, after the period of the fourth beast is consummated, the Ancient of Days plants His throne, and proceeds to judge it; and after a season and a time to judge the remnants also of the three which preceded it. And the world being thus cleared and cleansed from bestial tyranny, and without any ruler of any kind, behold who comes to take the government upon His shoulders: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the

clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Here are two acts: the one, the judgment of the nations by the Ancient of Days; the other, the investiture of the Son of man in their dominion for ever. Now our Lord teacheth, (John vi. 22,) that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father:" and in the 25th chapter of Matthew He presenteth Himself as sitting upon the throne of His glory, and gathering "all the nations" before Him for judgment. That office, therefore, which Daniel saw performed by the Ancient of Days, we are taught elsewhere is to be performed by His representative and delegate,—the Son, without whom He doeth nothing. Still, however, it is the Father's office put upon the Son of man, because as the Son of man He had fulfilled all righteousness, kept the law, and made it honourable, and therefore may well be entrusted with its execution. Clothed in the Father's glory as well as in His own glory is He to come, (Luke ix. 26,) and in the glory of the holy angels. That office, therefore, which the old prophets saw as the property of the Father, must be put upon Him in order that He may come in His Father's glory. He comes in His Father's glory by doing the action which is proper to God; of which one of the most important is judgment. This He expressly declares, in the Second Psalm, that He had received from the Father; and in the passage before us, that He will share with all those who overcome. Returning, now, to the prophecy of Daniel, we know that the first action of judging the four beasts, and all the earth which they overruled unto wickedness, pertains to the Son of man, as well as the second action of being installed in the dominion and government of them for ever and ever. But it may be asked, Are you sure that this judgment of the nations may not be over before the Son of man appears in the clouds of heaven? I answer, that though to a cursory reader it might so appear both from the narrative of Daniel and Matthew, a more careful study and deep consideration of the matter clearly shows it to be otherwise. For the judgment of the nations is expressly declared (Matt. xxv. 31) to be at His coming in His glory; also the consternation and mourning of all the families of the earth (xxiv. 30) is declared to be the effect of their seeing Him come; and in that judgment His saints are to take a part, having been co-partners of His sufferings, they are also to be co-partners of

His glory: but His saints are not gathered to Him until He come in the clouds with power and great glory; they are caught up to Him into the clouds to meet Him in the air, and to be ever with the Lord. The Ancient of Days planting His throne of judgment against the fourth beast, and consuming them unto the end, is the symbolical representation of the King of kings, with His heavenly hosts, coming against the beast and the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, as the same is set forth in the 19th chapter of the Apocalypse, and His receiving the kingdom, and holding it for ever, is the same with the following event described in the 20th chapter; while the other event, occurring at the end of and during the thousand years, is without prejudice to the kingdom of the saints, which is for ever and ever, (Rev. xi. 15, xxii. 5.) Seeing, then, that Christ doth in manifest glory accomplish the judgment of the fourth beast with His predecessors in the throne of iniquity, and that His appearance to this effect is to be in the cloud of glory, (for at the sign of the cloud it is that the nations are to shake with consternation, and wail with sorrow,) it seems to be put beyond a question that the morning star for which the same act of righteous vengeance is reserved must be the same with the cloud of glory, and with the sign of the Son of man. In Daniel it is set forth under the symbol of a fiery throne; now the cherubim, where the cloud of glory ever rested, are, both in Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse, set forth as the throne of God. Also in the Psalms He is described as coming riding upon the cherubim, (Ps. xviii.) The cloud was also a pillar of fire, and from it came forth the fire of vengeance which consumed the transgressors in the days of old; and I believe that from it, even from the presence of the Lord, from these seven lamps of fire, which are His seven Spirits, will come forth that fire of purification which, while it refines the gold and silver and precious stones, shall consume the chaff and wood and stubble, and bear them afar upon the bosom of its liquid stream into the lake that burneth for ever and ever. The Son of man, clothed with the Father's holiness and faithfulness, covered with that glorious panoply in which Jehovah dwelt from of old, shall perform that action of the Ancient of Days, and having finished it shall receive the dominion for ever and ever. This explanation of the twofoldness of Daniel's act of judgment and dominion applies equally to all other delineations of the same mystery contained in the Old Testament. For example, in the 110th Psalm the Father saith unto David's Lord, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" but straightway we find David's Lord Himself "striking through kings in the day of his wrath;" serving the Father in the great act of subjecting His enemies. God retains His right of

judging His enemies, with all His other rights in creation; and by giving them to the Son of man He proves that in Him are vested the rights of God as well as of man. Christ redeems the earth, and wins it for a possession to Himself and the chosen ones of God, in His character of Man: in His character of God, He comes to judge the sons of wickedness and the spirits of darkness, who are responsible not to man but to God; and we also, in our character, not of sons of man, but of sons of God, have this Divine office bestowed upon us by Him.

For man to judge man is not permitted, save as the delegate of God; wherefore judges are called gods: and we, being in very truth the sons of God, have this honour bestowed upon us by Christ, unto whom all judgment belongs as God, and unto whom it is given as man; because by becoming man He brought unto mankind forgiveness, for the rejection of which He will judge them, "because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God;" because as man He showed God's love to them, whereby His judgment is proved to be not in the absence but in the presence of love for the ends of holiness,—not for want of grace in God to forgive, but for want of faith in man to receive God's grace and rest upon His goodness; because as man He hath become acquainted with man's infirm conditions, and, putting strength into them all, hath kept the law, and shown how it may be fulfilled by infirm mortality, through faith in God, which enabled the Son of man to overcome. A judgment of fallen men, because they attain not to the law of holiness, is equitable only in the presumption that fallen manhood can keep that law; which was proved to be a true presumption by Christ in our fallen manhood, keeping it without spot and blameless, through faith upon God. This demonstration of the capacity of our mortal and corruptible nature, brings us all in guilty of the judgment to come; and the gospel is the message of God's grace to the guilty;—the guilty, not according to the measure or similitude of Adam's transgression, but according to the measure of them who have rejected redemption. The gospel of redemption through the blood of Christ was preached in the world from the instant of the Fall, as the means unto perfect holiness through faith; and in the condition of having rejected this redemption, not merely in the condition of having sinned with Adam, doth the electing love of the Father apprehend every one who hath been, or is to be saved. Election is another mystery of love than redemption; another and a higher love to those who have rejected the other; which when it comes doth enable us to believe in and rest upon the Redeemer, and is therefore redemption applied and made constant, but not

until we had first proved our entire worthlessness of, and deadness to, the blessing. Christ, therefore, judgeth all as the Redeemer of all; declared to be such by His resurrection from death, the captivity of all. "Because God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." The human nature is necessary, that men may be tried by their peers; the Divine nature is necessary, that the judges may not usurp the prerogative of God: the one, that we may be in full sympathy with the criminal at the bar; the other, that we may be in full sympathy with the God of grace, to whom he is responsible for grace rejected: and these two concur in Christ and His members, who are partakers with Him of the Divine nature, though not of Godhead. The Divine nature in Him and in us is that which is born of the Spirit, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. This is the seed of God in us and in Him, which is altogether holy and cannot sin, because it is born of God. This judgeth all things in the natural man, but is itself judged of no one. By this we are competent to be judges for God of all iniquity; and therefore it is written that the saints shall judge the world, and that they shall also judge angels; and in the text, that they shall receive the morning star of the resurrection, and act with Christ the tragical but righteous act of ruling the nations with a rod of iron, and breaking them in pieces like a potter's vessel. It is from this same presence in us of the Divine nature of the sons of God, first in flesh made manifest by the generation of Jesus Christ, a holy thing in flesh, that we receive the resurrection from the dead unto that light and glory which is inaccessible to the wicked, who shall never see light: as it is written, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," (Rom. viii. 11.) Resurrection is regeneration manifested to the sense; regeneration is resurrection manifested unto faith, yet still liable to all the trials and tribulations of faith, which holding fast patiently, we shall at length attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, and apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus. And the space between regeneration and resurrection in the believer is a continual act of self-judgment and condemnation, that we may not be judged with the wicked; a crucifixion and continual mortification of ourselves, that we may be shown worthy to sit in judgment upon others. It was Roman justice in Brutus first to condemn and execute his own son: it is Christian justice first to condemn ourselves, and do execution

upon ourselves. This shows that there is no partiality, that it is not for want of love: for what man ever yet hated himself? but altogether out of an irreversible law and pure desire of holiness. The Christian, moreover, who hath borne reproach from the world that he is to judge and been by it mistreated in all ways, and persecuted and put to death, and hath borne all "as the lamb which is led to the slaughter, and as the sheep which is dumb before the shearer," may well be acquitted of all malice or revenge, when he hath given the proof of a life's suffering, and a martyr's death, that he was moved not by malice but by love, and ensued blessing, not revenge. But if, as those misguided advocates of a partial redemption affirm, it be so, that Christ loved and died for none but the elect, and that His life's labours and death's pains were only for them yielded up, there is no proof of any kind whatever that the judgment is of love, and not of malice; of holiness, and not of revenge; and if, as the same zealous deniers of the truth maintain, His flesh was without the law of flesh, and was accessible only to physical infirmities, and not to temptations to sin, then is He utterly incompetent, from want of fellow-feeling, to sit in judgment upon those who are in this way tempted. Ah me! what a nerveless, jointless, helpless thing is this Reformation theology becoming in the hands of our doctors; how profitless to poor souls; how inglorious to God and to Christ! Though once, like the brazen serpent, it healed the Church, it has become, in the hands of an idolatrous generation like Nehushtan, a parcel of sounds, and must speedily be broken to pieces and ground to powder, like the golden calf, the god of the Egyptians. The calf the god of the lustful flesh, and the serpent the god of the cunning mind; the one the idol of the Papists, the other the idol of the Protestants; will, I think, come to the same end, and much about the same time, and the word of the Lord alone be exalted in that day. But let us have done with all such gainsayers of the truth, and contemplate the truth itself.

The glorious truth is, that when the time shall come for Christ to arise out of His place and shake terribly the earth; to issue from within the veil where He hath been so long hidden in the secret place of the Father, and take to Him his great power and reign, He shall not do an act or strike a blow, till He have gathered to Him all His saints from the one quarter under heaven to the other. He will not take upon Him one glorious prerogative conferred upon Him by the Father until He have called to His side from the caverns of the grave His own people, who have not loved their lives unto the death for His sake. He shall feel that it is not good for Him to be alone; and His Father and His God shall bring to Him that wife

whom, during His long sleep, He hath been building up for Him. He himself acting for the Father, as the Son of God, shall quicken the bodies of His many members, who shall ascend into the presence of His glory and stand before the Son of man. Coming as the angel of destruction, He can do nothing until the righteous witnesses have been removed out of Sodom, and He shall say unto them, "Come, my people, enter into your chambers of salvation." And high aloft into the air, borne in chariots of fire, as heretofore Elijah was, shall we enter that Shechinah glory, that cloud of the most excellent majesty of God where Christ abideth; and He shall present us unto Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Thus having entered into the bride-chamber, we shall be re-united to the bride in a marriage union never to be broken; we shall receive the benediction of the Father, and be instated together in that kingdom and dominion which hath no end. And now shall the mighty action of subduing the earth proceed apace; now shall the judgment written begin to be executed by Christ and His saints. What Enoch foretold, and every prophet since Enoch's time, shall begin to be accomplished; nor shall blow cease after blow till the whole fabric of the nations shall be shivered to pieces. Every island shall flee away, and the mountains shall not be found. The kings, and the captains, and the mighty men shall be consumed for ever from the presence of the Lord; nor shall it cease until everything that offendeth shall be cast out into the lake that burneth, and the earth made meet for the habitation of God and the Lamb, and their tabernacle, which is all the saints, into the new Jerusalem confederate. The order is—Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's at His coming; then the pulling down of all rule and authority and power, and then the giving up of the kingdom to the Father. Christ himself first ascendeth into the glorious light of God: thence He sendeth the Spirit to quicken all whom the Father hath destined to the same honour and glory, those sighing and longing for the sight of their Father and the habitation of their native city, He summoneth up to the holy presence of God at His coming; and these Christ and the Church, the whole mystical Church, dwell wrapt up in the skirts of the cloud of the Father's glory. To them, and them alone, as yet will it unfold its most holy womb. But the purpose is to fill the whole earth with its glory. The cloud shall yet expand itself from within the veil over the temple, and the court of Israel, and the court also of the Gentiles. It is now in the most holy place, embracing our High Priest within the veil: at His coming it shall spread over the holy place and enwrap the priests of God who minister there. And now it shall begin to shoot forth its fires and consume all the

evil-doers about the door of the congregation, and all those who offer strange incense upon the altar, and Core and his company, and every other wicked thing. This putting down of all rule, and authority, and power adverse to Christ, shall be done as manifestly from the dwelling-place of Christ and His Church, as heretofore the acts of judgment were done from the cloud of the presence of God. And this being done, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God, and His tabernacle shall come down among them and abide with them for ever. Then the skirts of the cloud shall raise themselves, and in the sight of the wondering nations the glorious city shall be revealed descending from heaven, having the glory of God and the Lamb, and in it shall God abide with men for ever.

CONCLUSION.

Many reflections have suggested themselves to my mind during this lecture, of which I shall only notice this one, that it seems to be put beyond a question that the first resurrection of the dead and the change of the living, and their assumption in one body unto Christ in the air, takes place before any stroke of exterminating judgment falls upon the nations. The idea of His coming, which has been again and again pressed upon us during this lecture, is that, when the times of the Father are accomplished, He shall send forth from heaven Jesus of Nazareth enwrapped in that same cloud of glory in which Jehovah hath ever abidden since the day that sin entered into the heart, and flesh, and habitation of men. In this cloud, or clouds,—for it is alike capable of covering all the summits of Sinai, or of contracting itself to the dimensions of the Holy of Holies,—shall Christ come forth from the invisible heavens into the world, the region of the senses, and straightway shall He call His saints, living and dead, into the same most holy presence chamber of God. The number of the elect being thus accomplished and glorified with their glorious Head, they are constituted the reigning and ruling family of God, His kings and priests for ever; and straightway their action shall begin by clearing the world of all wickedness. Then is the Christian Church the spiritual seed, the royal priesthood of God completed; never, I think, to be added to.—I have sometimes thought that the spiritual glory, into which the Christian Church is now baptized, and shall then be introduced, is to be the destination of those also who, during and at the end of the millennium, shall have been found faithful; and that from thenceforth there shall be but one condition of mankind, the spiritual glory of the new Jerusalem: whereas, during the millennium, there hath been besides this the natural glory of redeemed men in flesh and blood

subsisting; a condition which, according to this common notion, shall have an end when the thousand years are accomplished. I begin to doubt this; and incline to believe, that as man was created a living soul at first, an image of God and Lord of His creatures, though in flesh and blood, so shall man continue for ever redeemed from the power of death, and upheld in holiness by the work of Christ in the flesh; while we who are born again of the Spirit into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, shall exhibit the glory of the election, they the blessedness of the redemption of God in Christ, we neither marrying nor giving in marriage, they multiplying and replenishing the creation of God, according to the constitution of mankind ere yet they fell. And thus in a twofold glory shall the purpose of God unfold itself; the governors and the governed, the sons of God and the sons of men, the celestial bodies and the bodies terrestrial, of which both are glorious, though the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. This is a very deep and a very important subject, which properly comes to be handled under the millennium, and of which I have now given my convictions, in order that I may be understood, when I say, that the Christian Church is completed at the coming of Christ, and taken up into the cloud of His glory, ere ever one blow of the iron rod is struck, ere ever any one of the nations is broken to shivers, ere ever the action of putting down all rule and authority and power is once entered upon. If this be true, it gives an awful importance to the act of the coming of Christ, which in that case becomes decisive of those who are to reign with Him, and conclusive of that blessed society. Then the door of the bridal chamber is shut, and there is an end both of invitation and of admission into the honourable marriage of the Lamb. Those who are taken, are taken to be ever with the Lord in the holy presence of God; those who are left, are left upon the earth to take their portion in the miserable judgments which are to shake it to its centre, and consume the fabric of its iniquity. That out of these judgments a remnant shall escape, both of Jews and Gentiles, by acknowledging the name and dignity of the Lamb and His bride, there is no doubt; and that they shall people the earth, and possess it in much blessedness for a thousand years, and then decline away from their allegiance and be consumed, while the holy city, and the camp of the saints, the twofold containers of the twofold glory, the glory of the spiritual and the glory of the natural, shall be preserved the everlasting monuments,—of the creation redeemed by the work of Christ in flesh, of the election glorified by the work of Christ in the Spirit. Until Christ comes, therefore, the gospel of the kingdom is preached, and men are called with a heavenly calling,

to the inheritance of the resurrection and adoption of the sons of God in the new Jerusalem; after the coming of Christ there shall be no call to this high and glorious dignity. The work of God, which at Christ's former coming made a pause in the earthly things in order that it might proceed with the spiritual things, shall at His second coming, having completed the heavenly things, return to take up the earthly things, and fulfil all which was spoken concerning the earth by the prophets;—to judge the four beasts, to slay the four horns which scattered Israel and Judah, to restore the tabernacle of David, to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, and to reconstitute all things by the hand of Elias, which is to come; and with the Jewish people to make all the Gentiles to rejoice, in Abraham and his seed, to make all the families of the earth to be blessed. But, oh! through what storms and tempests, through what violence and bloodshed, will this blessed tranquillity be brought to pass! What a night, what a fearful night of horrid havoc, before that morning of peace shall dawn! To escape all which calamities that are about to come upon the earth, though it be a most worthy cause of watchfulness and prayer, and by our Lord held out as such, (Luke xxi. 36;) a much higher object of ambition it is to desire that glory of the Son of man, which shall then open the gates for the righteous nation to enter in, and anon shall shut them again. There lurks and lingers about the hearts of men a hope that Christ will so announce His coming as that we shall have time enough to get ready. Alas! shall Christ's words not be able to rouse us out of this shameful security, this dishonourable indifference to the coming of our Saviour, who taught His Church that it should come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the earth, as the deluge came on the former world, as fire from heaven fell down upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Will His parable of the virgins, to this very end addressed, not be able to teach the Church, that when His coming is announced, only those who are ready shall be able to enter into the honour and to the love and to the joy of the marriage chamber. If the Church would take Christ's own views of this subject, and give it the importance which He gives to it; if she would but hear the Spirit making his continual invocation to Christ to come; if she would but walk in holiness, and hasten the persecution of this present evil world; if she would but know the love of Christ in her redemption, and give scope to her own love of Him, and desire of His appearance; if she would but know this dignity of her election of God, and give way to the glorious desire of possessing it, there would be no unwillingness to treat of the subject of His second coming, but a strong desire to be informed of it, and

to know the signs of it, and to catch eager hold of every sign that it is near at hand: there would be no desire to part from the belief of it, to keep reservations in our heart, to remain in doubt, nourishing the vain notion of some sensible warning, or the very equivocal hope that we may be safe without coming to any conviction at all upon the subject. The greater part of the Church, yea, almost all, are lying in the arms of a most dangerous and fatal security, that without taking any interest whatever in the subject of Christ's coming, all will be safe with them, provided they be resting upon the merits of His atonement. I believe that no one is a true Christian who does not desire the appearing of his Lord; and being entreated with discourse concerning it doth nauseate and reject it. Rest when he please, his is not the true rest who can hear of the coming of our Lord and not be interested in it. He may be a moralist, philanthropist, theologian, or what not, but he is no Christian, who does not desire to hear of the coming of the Lord. His fear condemns him of want of faith in Christ as his Saviour and his Husband; his fear condemns him of present worldliness and fatal error. And if he will not be at pains to get rid of this fear, he will be condemned with the fearful; and if he avoid that very subject which calls upon him to deal with his fears, he gives place to his fear and prefers it to faith: he would rather continue in separation than be brought into union with Christ; he would rather doubt, than be assured; and worse signs of a Christian than these are nowhere to be found. Now to shake the vain security of these men, I present to them the whole New Testament Scriptures, which exhibit the Church in the attitude of waiting and looking for Christ; the instructions of our Lord and His apostles, who ever urge upon the Church the duty of watchfulness and preparedness. And if in the face of their instructions and invitations they will still persevere in their indifference to the whole subject, through the vain hope that they will receive notable warning time enough for making ready, I present to them the continual declaration that He cometh as a thief in the night, and with such sharp decision that the wife cannot help the husband, from whose arms she is taken, nor the friend the friend, with whom he is walking by the way, nor the servant her fellow-servant, with whom she is grinding at the mill. And if, still, they hope that though they may not be among them who are changed and taken at the Lord's appearing, they may yet be among those who shall be purified by the judgments, I ask upon what authority it resteth, that there will be two assumptions of the saints. I find that they who are Christ's are taken at His coming: and consequently those who are not Christ's are left. To be left seems to

me equal to not being Christ's. No doubt there will be a method of salvation still, but it is not the Christian method: the vocation to be with Christ is ended. The vocation to be subject to Christ and His saints is begun; but the vocation to reign with Him is ended. The dignity of sons of God is co-extensive with the privilege of the first resurrection, and therefore these two names, sons of God and sons of the resurrection, are interchangeable terms. "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." So that to those who are not counted worthy of that age, and the resurrection from the dead, there should still be a means of repairing the loss, and reaching the divine dignity of sons of God, is, if these our premises be right, a hope as vain and nugatory as is that of universal salvation, or of purgatory. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance. When the day of grace is ended, it is ended; when the day of judgment is begun, it is begun.

If, then, so much resteth upon the act of Christ's coming in the clouds of heaven, to raise the dead, and change the living saints, and if, during the whole course of the judgments which follow thereon, destructive of this present order of things, there be no door of admission open into the royal priesthood of God,—that is, the Christian Church,—this subject of the second advent is one of sterling importance to the Church in all times, and especially in these times we live in, when the voice "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," "Behold I come as a thief," hath gone forth in all directions with such impetuous urgency; in times like these, when the framework of society seems everywhere breaking up around us. If, as we have learned from this lecture, the judgments upon the nations are not to proceed until the saints be all gathered into glory, and Christ with their full number appear in the clouds of heaven, and we see those judgments threatening to commence with fierce and fiery controversy, we may well call one to another, "To thy watch-tower, brother, and look out for His coming." The thing now to be apprehended is, lest those who are expecting the Lord should be seized with premature astonishment, and paralysed in their minds, and laid open to the temptations of false Christs and false prophets; who shall make a stir, saying, "Lo here, lo there," as if Christ were to be found in the secret chamber or in the desert; who will be calling upon you to do this and to do that: but do it not, abide every one at his post, holding forth the word of God, and standing for the testimony of Jesus Christ, well assured that in the day of the Lord we shall be sought out as carefully as Lot was, and borne into a place of safety more secure than Zoar. To calm such

apprehensions and excitements and tumults, must be one of the constant works of the minister of Christ and pastor of the flock. Though the earth were removing, though the nations were rushing against each other like the whirlwinds, what have we to fear, whose city is secure, and whose rest is provided? Rather should we hold up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh. Nevertheless, I count it not good to close this lecture concerning the judgment of the nations, without observing that the thing which we see now proceeding, is only the violence with which Christendom is passing from the Papal to the Infidel form, and not the judgments with which it is to be consumed. It is the breaking up of the Papal firmament and foundations, for the Infidel, whose action is yet to come, and then cometh its judgment. Its action is under one head to make war against the Lamb, and those that are with Him, and then proceeds the judgment. Against that man of sin who heads and leads the last confederacy against the Lord and His anointed, shall the saints of God be called on high, and armed with weapons of heavenly temper, with "swords bathed in heaven." Against the beast and the false prophet, and his army, it is that the Lord and His hosts come forth in triumphant array, riding on white horses. And then it is that the destruction of the nations proceeds with battles of shaking. What we have seen in France is one of the ten horns giving its power to infidelity, that third form of the beast, whose body is all inscribed over with blasphemy. The Papal beast had blasphemy inscribed only on the seven heads, because in Rome only was the blasphemous assumption of that supremacy over kings, which is the single prerogative of Christ, whose name is King of kings, and Lord of lords. But now the people claim to be the sovereign of the sovereigns, from them the power originates, and to them it is responsible; their king reigns not by the grace of God, but by the authority of the people. He is not God's king, but the citizen-king. The people, all the members of the beast claim now the blasphemous supremacy of the rulers of the earth, which heretofore was claimed by Rome; blasphemy is therefore written upon the heads no longer, but over the whole body. What we see is the dispute between these two claimants of Christ's prerogatives; the people are striking down the pope's kings and setting up citizen-kings; the kingdoms are hating the whore, and giving their power unto the beast, utterly to destroy her. This is what we behold taking place around us: it is only a new storm and tempest over the deep, it is not the judgment of it as yet. The beast is casting his old withered wrinkled skin, and will come forth with deepest acts against the Lord and His Church, when He shall have clothed Himself in the

brightness of Lucifer the sun of the morning. Then when He shall have begun to clothe Himself in the glorious immunities of Christ, when He shall stand revealed in all His power and splendour, and shall be putting down all that opposeth Him, and reigning as God in the temple of God, then it is that the Lord shall be manifested in the cloud with all His saints, to consume Him with the breath of His mouth, and to destroy Him with the brightness of His coming.

LECTURE VIII.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP.—HIS EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH OF SARDIS.

REV. iii. 1-7.

"*And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess His name before my father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"

TO any one comparing the four former with the three latter of these seven epistles of our great Bishop to His churches, there will be manifest, in the midst of a constant unity of matter and of style, this circumstantial difference, that whereas the temptation in the former arose from heresies, false apostles, and a false prophetess, in the latter they arise from none of these causes, but from hypocrisy, indifference, and self-aggrandisement; the former an outward visible enemy, the latter an inward weakness and decay. In all the third chapter there is neither mention of Nicolaitanes nor of Balaamites, of feigned apostles, of false prophets, of the sorceress, nor of anything holding of the flesh and the visible world, as in the second; but on the other hand, there is mention of a name to live while there is deadness at heart, of lukewarmness and self-sufficiency, and other forms of trial which come from within ourselves. In each case we except one Church, that of Smyrna and of Philadelphia, which stand amongst the others as examples of what the Chief Shepherd would

have them to be. This remarkable difference between the forms of temptation, whereto the former and the latter divisions of the seven churches are exposed, induce inquiry as to the cause. That it was really and truly so that the churches of Sardis and Laodicea were under the temptation of inward decay, and not of outward evil, there can be no doubt; but seeing that by these instances the Lord was speaking to all the churches, through all the time of His absence, we want a reason why He should choose part of them under the temptation of outward and part of inward evils. The answer is, that thereby He would the more completely embrace the round of all temptations whatsoever, and present to all churches, and to every Church the proper counsel and conduct in their various manifold perplexities. There are these two open quarters of temptation, our own unfaithfulness from within, and the assaults of our enemies from without, from which every Church and every Christian is assaulted; and therefore it was most considerate of our good and wise Bishop to set before us the faith and hope, the strength and consolation, in which these various assaults are to be withstood and overcome. While this is a good and sufficient answer to the question upon the first great principle of interpreting these epistles in such a way as to be fruitful of edification to the universal Church, and to the individual churches, and to the private persons who compose them, it obtaineth another very beautiful resolution upon the principle of a historical application into which we have been led as we proceeded. In a historical point of view, the Catholic Church hath existed in two conditions, the one before the other, since the Reformation. Before the Council of Trent, the true Church of God was in the bosom of that ecclesiastical and political system, into which Christendom had wrought itself under the pope and the emperor; but that most wicked council having sanctified all the abuses, and affirmed all the errors, and canonised all the corruptions which had crept in, having adopted the feigned apostles, and the Balaamite doctors, and the false prophetess, and everything else, however abominable, which the lapse of ages had introduced, did seal up the Roman Church into the condition of an apostasy, where a few witnesses may be maintained, and no doubt are maintained unto the end; but where the visible Church is no longer in existence, but the visible apostasy. And from this time forth we must look for the visible Church out of her, in those who came forth from her protesting against all her evils, and seeking to reform them; not constituting any schism or sect, but seeking to preserve the Church visible in contradistinction from the visible apostasy. The second state of the Catholic Church, therefore, we have existing in the various Reformed churches of

Europe, apart from the Papacy, which hath now, in the Council of Trent, formally and finally apostatised from the faith, nor can be any more looked upon as a visible Church. And so, in chap. iii. we hear no more of Balaam, or Jezebel, or fleshly lusts, but of hypocrisy, false brotherhood, and lukewarmness. Looking, therefore, to the Protestant Church for the historical antitype of Sardis and Philadelphia and Laodicea, it doth but remain that we should discriminate the three states of it therein set forth.

The first is the glory of a name which the Reformed Churches, one and all, acquired by the power of argument, with which they resisted and overcame their antagonists, and by the excellent forms of doctrine and discipline which they instituted among themselves. Upon that name they are subsisting still, when almost all that entitled them to it is departed; unsound in almost every point of doctrine, utterly relaxed and broken down in discipline, indifferent to, or ignorant of, the great questions between the Church and the apostasy, yea, and of the authority and dignity of the Church, become the idolaters of a book, and of those persons who can make the most plausible and powerful arguments upon some of its words, behold the Protestant Church as vain and proud of her name, as if she still had amongst her the Luthers and the Calvins, the Hookers and the Latimers, the Knoxes and the Melvilles, through whose means God wrought her deliverance from the house of bondage. This is the Sardis state of the Church, which we see exhibited in the High Church parties of England and Scotland, as distinguished from the Methodist or Evangelical parties which have started up in both, and indeed in all parts of Christendom within the last century, originating with the labours of Wesley and Whitfield, and propagated by the labours of Romaine, Scott, Newton, and such like worthy men. These, together with all their followers, differ from the old veteran school of the Reformers, by caring little about the glory of a name, whether for learning, for orthodoxy, for discipline, or for anything else, save zeal in promoting personal safety, and extending the bounds of the Evangelical kingdom. The authority of the Church, the vitality of the sacraments, the deep and large knowledge of the truth, the zealous and masterful exposure of error, anything and everything which appertaineth to nice discernment and discrimination, is by them set at nought; and looked upon as troubling the happy peace and perfectness which they enjoy. The great mass of their writing consisteth of Reports for religious societies, in order to show how increased they are in goods, and how excellent and wonderful are their doings over the whole earth; and next to these their popular sermons, holding up the all-sufficiency of those

most narrow views of doctrine and practice which they hold. If they are tried with any higher doctrine—Calvinistic, for example—they say, Of what use is it? it doth but stir controversy;—with any newer doctrine, as the Lord's coming and kingdom, they say, Why withdraw us from the sufficient way of truth in which we are walking? Is not that which we now hold sufficient for salvation? If they are tried with any fuller doctrine, as concerning the person of Christ, and the manifestation therein of the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they say, Surely it cannot be true, for our ministers never preach it to us. If they be tried with any pure doctrine, as concerning the assurance of faith and the completeness of sanctification, body, soul, and spirit, they say, What dangerous doctrine, that a person should be sure that God hath saved him in Christ! where then the necessity of our religious societies and other works; for if we are safe, what more is needed? They are instant about nothing else but their own personal safety. If they be tried with any more hearty and loving doctrine, as the atonement and redemption wrought out for all, they are distracted with rage, saying, Where then is the difference between us and the wicked? never dreaming that it is possible of the two classes they may be the more wicked, like the Pharisees of old, who were much farther from God than the publicans and sinners. To this form of the Church belong the great body of the dissenters both of England and Scotland, and so many of the established churches as look upon the religious societies, and their subscriptions, and their reports, as the great index to the prosperity of religion. If there be any meaning in these names by which the seven churches are designated, as hath been thought by many excellent interpreters, the name Laodicea, signifying *the voice or judgment of the people*, is most expressive of another feature of this last form of spiritual temptation; for, beyond all question, the only authority which they acknowledge is the voice of the majority. Their ministers and leaders everywhere are of the people's choosing, their responsibility to the people, their influence according to their popularity; newspapers and magazines are their oracles, and the extent of their circulation is the criterion of their excellence. It is as pure a democracy, and as little of a Church-polity, as the present government of France: it keeps up the form of a Church, as France doth the form of a monarchy; but the reality, the power, the dignity, and the compelling authority are all gone. This is the Laodicean state of the Church, which is running a most rapid career, and daily winning upon the old Reformation ecclesiastical spirit; which, like the old Tory spirit in the state, is ashamed to show itself, and content to conform to the arbitrary

dictation of public opinion;—of the *popular judgment*, which is the literal translation of the word Laodicean.

Between these two is introduced an intermediate state of the Church called the Philadelphian. It will be observed, that, in what we have written upon the historical application of those seven churches, we have regarded them rather as seven successive forms of trial, with the corresponding forms of resistance, than seven distinct and well-defined periods of time. And, forasmuch as a new spirit flows in upon the Church, like a tide gradually and slowly swelling to its height, and then slowly receding to make way for another; we may, and commonly do, have the presence of two at the same time subsisting; the one in the condition of ebbing out, the other of flowing in. Such is the state in which the proud and mighty spirit of the Reformation, and the broad, yet shallow, pretending, yet weak spirit of Evangelicalism, are exhibited before us; the former almost ebbed away, the latter coming in with crested pride, and expecting to sweep down all barriers of former wickedness, and possess the wide world. But though thus proud and vaunting, it hath done but little towards the conversion of mankind, and is yet very far from the mark of the prize of its high ambition. It is coming in, but not yet near its spring-tide mark. And before it arrive at this, there will be exhibited fair and lovely, yet small and unnoticed, "with little strength," yet faithful to the word of Christ and to the testimony of His name, the Philadelphian Church, whose commendation is the sweetest of all the seven. In contrast to the Church of Sardis, which was bound together only by a name, this Church so united by true brotherly love, (as the name Philadelphian imports,) and keeps the word of His patience, and is preserved from the hour of fearful trial which is to come upon the whole earth. This word of Christ's patience I regard not as referring to trials of persecution so much as to the patient looking for His appearing: "Be patient," brethren, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" and the hour of temptation viewed in reference to the same historical sequence would refer to that fearful tribulation of all nations which precedes His coming, from which this faithful Church is preserved, and out of which it is taken. Without going into particulars at this stage of our inquiry, if I err not, this Philadelphian Church hath reference to that chosen few who are set for the witnesses of the Lord's coming, and for the testimony of all His truth, who are now beginning to draw upon themselves the reproaches both of the waning high-churchmanship, and of the growing Evangelicalism. Interposed between the two it stands lifting up its voice for all that is precious in the good work of Reformation, adopting all

that is precious in the evangelical work; and adding thereto all that hath been found most precious in other ages of the Church,—a witness for all the truth. With these men I cast in my lot, to keep the word of Christ's patience, and to enter into the reward of His inheritance. To the standard which with others I have been enabled to lift up for a fuller gospel than the Reformers preached, or the evangelicals preach, I perceive a rapid gathering of good men and true, from both the Sardian and Laodicean parties of the Church. But nothing like a general assent of the two bodies, who are only the more enraged, and forget their common quarrel to put down this family of brethren who are everywhere arising armed in the panoply of truth. Scotland, the most active and energetic and religious of the kingdoms, is beginning the fierce and furious work of pulling down this novelty, and others will follow: and as there both parties are sworn against us, so elsewhere will it be; but Christ will give us the shelter of His wings, and we shall be saved when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. To those who are looking and waiting for Him, He addresseth the words of the prophet: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain," (Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.) Hatred and opposition to these the wise virgins, who are witnessing against the Sardian nominalism and the evangelical self-sufficiency, will unite these two parties into one, and bring out the evil of both. They will no longer have any cloak for their sin; and our work of testifying be over, they will collapse and coalesce into one great hideous wickedness, combining all the people into a cold selfishness which the Lord shall visit with the loathings of His disgust. And this, if I err not, is the true account of the Sardian, Philadelphian, and Laodicean spirits, as they are now witnessed in the Church called Protestant, which since the Council of Trent hath been the only form of the visible Church; Romanism being the apostasy visible, the harlot confessed.

Such I conceive to be the true order of the succession of the last three churches of the apocalypse, looked at in their historical aspect; but as this hath always been in our eye subordinate to the catholic aspect under which we have sought to view them, for the profit of all Christian churches and of all Christian men, we now return to our ordinary method of considering the truth of God and of Christ set forth to us in the epistle to the Church of Sardis;—premising only that Sardis was a city of great antiquity and renown, the capital of

Lydia, and the seat of Crœsus, far-famed for his wealth and splendour, whom Cyrus overthrew, and possessed his capital ere yet he became master of Babylon, of all the cities of Asia the only one that surpassed Sardis in riches and splendour. It was situated about twenty miles south-east of Thyatira, and was noted for its prosperity and sensuality. To the angel of the Church therein planted, this epistle is addressed; which we shall as usual take up under its three parts. First, the Universal Bishop's style or designation: Secondly, His message to the ministers: Thirdly, The Spirit's promise and exhortation to all the members of that Church and of all churches, and to every one that hath an ear to hear.

I.—OUR HIGH PRIEST'S STYLE OR DESIGNATION.

"These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." The word in the original, which is translated *hath*, signifyeth possession, or ownership, or occupation. The term seven Spirits, occurring in the benediction beside the Father and Christ, can only signify the Holy Ghost; and the seven stars are, by interpretation of Christ, the angels, or ministers, or bishops of the churches. The style here adopted doth therefore assert Christ to be the possessor of the Holy Ghost and of the Christian ministry; who hath then to do with them as it seemeth to Him good. What is intended to be conveyed by this information, and wherefore should it be held forth to the Church of Sardis in particular? Let us first do the part of the doctor in unfolding the matter, and then of the pastor in applying it.

1. In order to explain the full force and application of the prerogative implied in these words, "who hath the seven Spirits," it is necessary to take a distinction between the Spirit of Christ and the Seven Spirits, or the Holy Ghost, as given to and enjoyed by the seven, that is, all the churches; or, the one holy catholic Church. The Spirit of Christ, which we need to have in order to being His members, (Rom. viii. 9, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,") signifies that Spirit of a holy redeemed elect man which was in God's chosen One, whom He raised up from among the people; that Spirit which in its fulness, both of faculty and of action, is described in these words of the Prophet Isaiah: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity

for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," (Isaiah xi. 2–4.) This is that perfect form of manhood, that perfect image of God which Christ exhibited in our fallen nature, making it not to become unfallen manhood, as ignorant and ill-informed men foolishly set forth, but making it to become spiritual manhood, which can know neither fall nor imperfection: and being so, capable when it hath raised the body in spiritual perfection, of propagating itself into other persons, as a spiritual power capable, in a corrupt body, of overcoming its mortality, as it doth in the Church, yet waiting for the redemption of the body, and groaning until it be brought to us at the coming of the Lord with all His saints. This is the Spirit of Christ, not the Holy Ghost in His Divine essence, but the Holy Ghost as rendered into the life of holy manhood by Christ, and thence propagated in streams of life through all the Church of God. As the mother alone breathes the vital air of heaven, and, having rendered into nourishment of life, imparts it in the warm stream of her blood to the babe which she carries in her womb, so Christ alone is capable of receiving the Holy Ghost in His proper essence, as being Himself God; and having therewith first sanctified His body in the generation and all His life long, and then raised it from the dead, He doth from that body send forth the regenerating life into those who are in Him, as the members are in the body, or the branch in the vine, or the child unborn in the mother. He, with His Church in Him and of Him, forms one body animated with one life and one mind; He, breathing the spirit and elaborating it into the stream of human life which He sends throughout His many members. This is what in Scripture is called "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," derived to us from eating His flesh and drinking His blood; as it is written, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," (John vi. 53–57.) In these words we are taught, that the life of a Christian is not by receiving the Holy Ghost out of the Godhead direct, (which is to make man capable not only of comprehending, but of direct communion with, and absolute receiving of, the incommunicable Godhead,) but out of the fountain of human life, of everlasting human life, which is opened up in Christ. And this is the reason why over the bread of the Lord's Supper it is said, "This is

my body; take, eat." Not, This is my Spirit, but This is my body. And why not This is my Spirit? Not because we receive at that time His flesh as the Papists doat, but because we receive the Spirit of an embodied Christ; not of a disembodied Christ. The thing we want is the Spirit of an embodied man, able to take possession of this spirit of an embodied man which is in me, and to empower it to please God. I have the life of an embodied man under a law of sin: what I want is the life of an embodied man under a law of holiness. It is not abstract spirit, but spirit with bodily affections, which I need: it is not the voidness and incomprehensibleness of a disembodied Spirit which is presented to me in Christ, but the distinctness, and fulness, and sympathy, and power of an embodied Spirit. I know a flesh-and-blood man, I see such a one altogether holy in Christ; and I know that He hath power to propagate Himself by regeneration into as many as the Father shall give Him, and of forming in them an image of Himself, who is the perfect image of God. Now this is what I need; and this is preached to me to be in Christ, and to be communicated in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper; the former being the regeneration, the latter the completeness of the body, and likewise the completeness of the inheritance. This is what in Scripture is called Christ in us, ("the Holy Ghost in us is, I think, a different thing:") this is what is called the mind, and the Spirit, and the life of Christ. This also is what the apostle signifies, when he thus writes: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," (Gal. ii. 20.) And in respect of knowledge, this is what He means, when He says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood," (Gal. i. 15, 16.) As it was the very God, who was present in the man Christ Jesus, (though without Godhead attributes, which cannot come within the limits of manhood,) the very person of the eternal Son of God, even so verily is that very person present in the believer, and that continually to nourish and sustain him, and rear him up to the stature of the perfect man, to the measure of the fulness of Christ. We are members of Christ, of His flesh and His bones; we have not a separate life or a separate being, or a separate substance, but the same, though our personality be distinct. And so the body of Christ being many members, and yet one Christ, (1 Cor. xii. 12,) doth continually hold up to view the great fundamental principle of the Godhead, which is more than one person in one substance or

life. This is the true doctrine of the Christian life, but one wholly unintelligible to those who account it as blasphemy to say that Christ could be tempted to sin; as if this were to assert that God could sin, or that God could be tempted. What would those divines (falsely so called) say to the primitive Church, contending against the Arians for the liberty of saying, not that God could be born, and could be tempted, and could die, but that God was born, was tempted, and did die? Methinks some of our Presbyteries, and Synods, and Assemblies too, would make sad havoc of the Nicene Fathers, if they could lay their hand upon them. But if, in saying that God was born, was tempted to sin, was dead, we did say that Godhead was under these conditions of the mortal creature, then indeed we were worthy to be excommunicated as heretics; and the same was done by the Nicene Fathers to those who would not assert all these things of God personal, though they would have died many times rather than assert them of Godhead substantial. The ignorant man says, How can these things be? and the heady man says, Away with such subtle distinctions and refinements; and the self-sufficient man says, I abhor all such things: but the wise man says, I will consider them; and the well-instructed man says, I know them to be the ground and pillar of the truth. But to return—

I have said this much concerning the Spirit of Christ, in order to clear the ground for what I am now about to say concerning the seven Spirits of God which He asserteth Himself to possess. The body of Christ, the Church of the living God, who are thus by regeneration begotten into the life, and reared up into the manhood and maturity, of Christ, is for certain great ends of God thus constituted and prepared; and to fit it for these ends it is that the Seven Spirits, or the completeness of the Holy Ghost, (for that is the power of the number seven,) is given to Christ; in order to fit and furnish them for their high offices, whether in this age or in that which is to come. When I say the completeness of the Holy Ghost, I mean the communicable completeness; that fulness which is necessary for the ends of God in constituting a Church, in giving to Christ a holy seed. When God had raised Him from the dead, and set Him above all in the Highest, and put all under His feet, He gave Him, thus advanced and glorified, to the Church, which is His fulness, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Again, after He had perfected righteousness, and presented His body without spot upon the cross by the Eternal Spirit, and was by the Father declared to be His Son with power, by the resurrection from the dead; He had still a something more to receive, which is the pro-

mise of the Holy Ghost: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear," (Acts ii. 33.) For this unction, we have observed in our digression upon the endowments of the Church, He had positively and more than once commanded His disciples and apostles to tarry at Jerusalem, until it should be poured out upon them from on high;—showing us, that though regenerate persons, already quickened by His words, which are spirit and life, upon whom He had already breathed after His resurrection, still they must wait for the furnishing and fitting out of the Holy Ghost, before they could enter upon any undertaking for God and Christ; before they could be the Church, the witness of the resurrection, the preacher of the gospel, the pillar and ground of the truth, the teacher unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places of the manifold wisdom of God. This office of accomplishing the Church for all things for which she is destined in the purpose of God, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, is performed by the Holy Ghost in his own, and not in Christ's personality; as the Comforter or Paraclete, and not as the Spirit of Christ. In which office He abideth with the Church for ever, and leads her into all the truth, taking the things of Christ and showing them to her soul. Christ in His own person communicates to the Church His life and holiness, His flesh and blood, the continual support of His being; the Holy Ghost, in His own person, communicates to her all the outward advantages which lie between this world of humiliation in which we are, and that world of glory to which we are called. As Christ, when He ascended up on high, had given to Him all power in heaven and earth, received then "all things which were delivered to Him of the Father," (Matt. xi. 27;) so we by the Holy Ghost do receive in this present age the knowledge and the faith of the same, and in the age to come the actual possession of them. Nor receive we only the knowledge and faith of them in this present age, but likewise a first-fruits and earnest in those gifts of the Church which are part and parcel of the full possession which shall be brought to us at the redemption of the inheritance. And in this sense the Spirit is again and again called the seal of the good things to come, the heavenly inheritance, and made consequent upon a man's believing in Christ: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Spirit of promise which is the earnest." And therefore also He is called "the Spirit of promise," both as being the promise of better things to come, and as being the special promise of the Christian Church, written in the Prophets, and confirmed unto us by the Lord, in these last words which He

spake to His Church, (John xiv. xv. xvi.) It is evident from all the promises in these chapters respecting the Comforter, that He is distinct both from the person, Christ, who sends him, and from the persons, Christ's servants, to whom he is sent; and as a distinct person from the persons of the saints He is ever recognised in the Scriptures; for example, in respect of his witness, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" and again, in respect to His intercession, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) Here the Spirit in the heart of the saint maketh intercession for him in cases where he himself is in ignorance, not knowing what he ought to pray for. The truth therefore is, that, so far as the personal subsistence of a believer is concerned, he is to attribute it to Christ, who hath redeemed him, and doth form anew in him the image of God; so far as his outward actings are concerned, his powers and functions as the Church of God, whether in humility or in glory, he is to ascribe them to the Holy Ghost;—Christ the inhabiting life, in whom we live and move and have our new being; the Holy Ghost, the endowment of that life with honour and power over the creation of God.

For want of keeping this distinction in view, together with general ignorance upon the doctrine of the Trinity, and the offices of the several persons thereof, the great question of our Lord's human nature is at present fearfully confused. So far as I can gather the meaning of the gainsayers and persecutors of the truth, their notion is, that we affirm the Second Person to have been of Himself insufficient, and in continual peril, or rather certainty, of failing, had not the Third Person come in to His help; and so they blow the trumpet of falsehood over the land, asserting that our doctrine, or rather the doctrine of Scripture, that Christ presented His body holy by the eternal Spirit, is as bad as to deny that Christ himself is God. Whereof the error, and the crime is, I believe, more from their ignorance than their malice. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If they would be at pains to learn on a subject on which it is no dishonour to a man to be ever learning, they would find that their own imagination is the heretic, and, in some instances perhaps, their envy and malice. For those whom with unsparing rancour in all ways, and by all means they misrepresent, maintain that the second person, and He only, did the work of

overcoming all His enemies, of condemning sin in the flesh, of overcoming the world, and casting the devil out. The Son in His own person, and not the Holy Ghost for Him, did the work of perfect righteousness in flesh of our flesh, in mortal and corruptible, and, so far as its own properties were concerned, in sinful flesh. And why then do we speak so much of the Holy Ghost's part in the work? First, Because the Scriptures do so, as to His generation, (Luke i. 35;) as to His baptism, (iii. 22;) as to His temptation, (iv. 1;) as to His preaching, (iv. 18;) as to His miraculous works, (Acts x. 38;) as to His sacrifice, (Heb. ix. 14.) Now we are resolved to speak as the oracles of God do speak, according to the commandment: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Secondly, Because it is the first point of all divinity, that Godhead properties cannot come into the compass of manhood limitations. And therefore, because the Son of God, in doing the work, doth it as the Son of man, we cannot bring His Godhead and mix it up with His manhood. If He doth not make use of His Godhead substance, of what doth He make use in restoring life and holiness to the corrupt substance of the virgin? He makes use of the Holy Ghost given to Him of the Father, who comes to the Son of man as the redeeming and regenerating life; and is by the Son of man used for the ends of sanctifying and immortalising that nature of ours which He took as He found it, unholy; and made it holy the same instant He took it, by the eternal Spirit. This gives us the manner of Christ's subsistence as a man, and the Son of man; this is the only scriptural and theological account of His personal subsistence; the person of the Son of God united to the nature of fallen man by the Holy Ghost, and thereby prevailing to stay and repress all its sinful and mortal propensities, to make it sinless and immortal. And this also is the account of our personal subsistence in Him: He, with that same spirit of life, apprehends us and maintains us through faith upon Him in a continual life of holiness, notwithstanding the preventions of our own evil nature.

If I err not therefore, the distinction between the Church mystical, —that is, the Head with its members, the Vine with its branches, —considered in itself, and the same body possessed with the fulness of the Holy Ghost, is the same distinction as between the person and the office-bearer; the personality standing in Christ, the qualifications for the office standing in the Holy Ghost. All the will is of Christ, all the manifestation of the Holy Ghost. If we think a good thought, if we speak a good word, if we do a good act; in one word, if we live to God, the glory appertaineth to Christ,

who quickeneth in us all life and holiness, and maintaineth what He quickeneth; as men redeemed, the glory appertains to the Redeemer; but as men advanced high above man's original estate, the glory appertaineth to the Holy Ghost. To have brought us back again to be God's image and likeness, and, I think, also to bring us back again to be the lords of the earthly things, belongs to Christ: but to carry us into the higher region of the heavenly things, and to present us in the new Jerusalem to dwell with God, and to exercise rule over the heavens; this is proper to the Holy Ghost. But this is a deep subject, and needs yet further clearing out: we shall therefore endeavour to work it upon a deeper parallel.

The constitution of man originally was earthly; "The first man is of the earth earthy;" his utmost dignity arose no higher than to the supremacy of the sheep, and oxen, and other creatures upon the earth. To him belonged "the earthly things." To redeem this creature and his earthly kingdom out of the hands of the devil, and utterly to destroy the devil's works, and cast him out of the nations and kingdoms of the world. This is the work which is set for Christ, and plainly written for Him in Moses, and the Psalms, and the Prophets: and this to do He must wear the image of the earthy man, and present it faultless in the sight of God, without spot and blameless. This being done, His reward is the redeemed world, and the redeemed race of men; the abolition of death, and the casting out of Satan, and the recovery of creation to that original intention and operation which sin had in all things defaced, but in nothing destroyed. To rise from the grave in the condition of the first Adam, eating and drinking, and having dominion over the earth, and to bring mankind from the grave, and to draw the world from under the curse; this, verily, was the thing for which Christ had wrought, and the proper reward of His finished work. To this were added various subsidiary arrangements of God with respect to the ordering of the redeemed earth; as that Abraham's family should be a nation of kings and priests; and David's family the king over them, and so over all the earth; and Canaan their possession for ever and ever. But these are only parts of the great whole, that the earth, with flesh and blood its ruler, should, by Christ's taking flesh and blood, be all reclaimed from sin and death, from the grave and hades. And to do all this the Second Person of the Godhead, in His personal subsistence as man, availeth; and in Him thus redeemed, mankind in flesh and blood as at first created, and the world, shall be exhibited in the ages to come; fulfilling those very ends for which our Creator did intend them. But, besides

these earthly things which Christ purchased to Himself as a man by His blood, there are heavenly things which were given to Him by the good pleasure of the Father, and which are to be looked upon as the reward, and honour, and glory with which God crowned Him as His own Son; in His subsistence of man, indeed, and because He humbled Himself to subsist as a mortal and servile man, but chiefly because being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, He did thus humble and abase Himself for the glory of the grace of God. Because as Son of God, and very God of very God, He did thus humble Himself to become a worm and no man, to be broken-hearted with reproach and consumed with grief, God did far more highly exalt Him than to the head of the earthly things, even to the head of the heavenly things; He did reward Him with the fellowship of His own throne, and constitute Him for ever both Christ and Lord. This dignity, far above all angels, and principalities, and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come, is out of man's natural sphere, is out of redemption's proper limits, is a new going forth of God to glorify the creature, is a thing yet unprecedented in the annals of creation, is indeed the bringing in of creation's majestic Head—of creation's crowned King. It was indeed the oldest purpose of God, co-eval with the birth of a purpose, that thus it should be completed, and thus for ever stand secured; and the Church also is to be brought into the fellowship and likeness of the Christ, fashioned for His helpmeet, His beautiful bride, and faithful spouse for ever: but though old in the purpose, as the origin of any purpose in God, and old in the word as the fall of man, it became a reality at the ascension when Christ was carried up to the right hand of the Father, and crowned Lord of all; not there to sit inactive, but there to sit supreme in council and in work, to hold the sceptre and execute the behests of God over all the creation of God, visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth. And to this heavenly kingdom we are called of God, who have received grace to believe in Christ and been baptized into His Church.

Be it then well observed, that this elevation of the man Christ Jesus, above man's original and primitive condition in which he was created, must, like every new work of God be performed by the three persons of the blessed Godhead. It is a new thing that man should sit upon the throne of the eternal God; and to fit man for this occupation, cannot be without a working of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, superinduced upon that work which generated him the earthy man. He, the Son, is the subject of this work; the Father is the worker of it upon the Son of man; and the Holy Ghost is the

manifestation of it. That promise of the Holy Ghost with which He was gifted when He ascended up on high, is no less, therefore, than the needful putting forth of Godhead power to carry Him into the heavens, and fit Him for the work of ruling the heavens: and while it is the mighty beginning, it is also the mighty upholding of manhood in that new sovereignty of God, and the means, the only means, whereby the Church can be brought to that highest estate of creation. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, therefore, as distinguished from the Spirit of Christ, I regard as the work of God in His ascension and glorification, as distinguished from the work of God in His generation: both works are for a continuance; the work of His generation is continued in our regeneration; and the work of our glorification shall be at our resurrection to glory, whereof we have now an earnest and a first-fruits in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, with which the Church was endowed at her Lord's ascension, that she might know for what a high and glorious end she is destined of God, and of Christ, in the ages to come, for ever and ever. And, if I mistake not, we are now got to the root of the matter.

Be it so, then, that the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which was not until Christ was glorified, which was not but for the glorification of Christ, is a new forthgoing of Godhead to advance his creature into a new estate into which creation brought it not, and for which incarnation of Godhead did but prepare the way; and we have a great light cast upon the text before us, and, indeed, upon the whole mystery of God and of Christ. Up to the time of His baptism He was the man generated of the Holy Ghost, in the condition of keeping the law; the man made of a woman under the law, the holy man and the faithful Jew. From the time of His baptism with water and the Holy Ghost, He is the Church man, the first Christian, enjoying the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the earnest of that glorious reward which at the ascension He is to receive from the Father; waiting, however, still for the redemption of the body, and the laying down of flesh and blood, in order to His entering the kingdom of heaven. In these two estates He is successively the federal Head of two races. The first, the Jewish nation hereafter to exist in holy flesh and blood, upon whom and into whom He shall pour that regeneration which shall circumcise both heart and flesh, and make them able to keep the whole law of God. And to this state the other nations shall be free to enter themselves; and not taking the advantage of that privilege, nor yielding reverence and obedience to the Jew, Christ's mystical flesh, they shall, at the end of the thousand years, suffer a fearful catastrophe, after which the whole creation of flesh and blood upon the whole

earth shall for ever be Christ's mystical flesh, originating from and continuing that form of being, man redeemed from the curse of the law, which Christ was from His birth to His baptism. The second race of which, from His baptism to His ascension, He is the federal Head, is the baptized Church; which now enjoys the same baptism of the Holy Ghost, and is required to lead the same supernatural and wonder-working life, until the day of her general congregation from the grave and from the world, into the New Jerusalem, which is the completeness of their number and the consummation of their glory; and thenceforth shall they show forth unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places God's archetypal form of being, creation's glorified Head, the Almighty's chiefest work, Christ and His Church, one body, "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all," yea "all the fulness of God."

To the effect of advancing the being of the Church out of the natural into the spiritual, it is that Christ hath the seven Spirits of God in His hand, to do with as pleaseth Him, besides having in Himself Holy-Ghost life to quicken those in flesh and blood subsisting whom it pleaseth the Father to give unto Him. That surpassing mightiness of the power of God, (Eph. i. 19,) whereby the dead Christ was exalted into the supreme Lord of heaven, is a working of the divine power, which far, far outpeereth creation and regeneration, and aught that hath been or ever shall be done of the Almighty God. And all this energy of power exhausting the utmost amount of what shall ever be manifested on earth or in heaven, Christ now possesseth in hand, to do with it the eternal purpose of God, which is to glorify the Church with the same glory He himself now possesseth. Christ is there asserted and vindicated against Socinians, Unitarians, Infidels, and Devils, to have been the Creator of all things, by His occupying and putting forth that unexampled work which lifts creation from its grave, and sets it far above creation's primitive estate into an elevation, and a dignity, and an infallibility, of which there never hath been and never will be the like. The Church glorified as far surpasseth creation arrayed and accomplished in all primeval goodness, as Christ upon the throne of the Eternal God, and upholding all things by the word of His power, surpasseth Adam, creation's lord. And therefore He who hath in hand that power of God, the seven Spirits, with which to do the work that surpasseth, is proved to be at the least not inferior to Him who did the work that is surpassed. But He is proved to be the same, inasmuch as it is creation which He setteth on its feet again, and fixeth in its rest and in its glory for ever, but who should be able to enter into creation's chambers and reform them all, out of creation's dust to rebuild creation's fabric all

anew, and as He did it to infuse into it a cement of immortality, and cover it with the very glory of God: who could do this but the Creator himself? Whereby we come to know that the man who was crucified is He who created all things in heaven and on earth, is the very power and mightiness of God, is above all power visible, above all power comprehensible; "for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And, oh! when this is made sure, which very many confess with their lips, but very few understand or believe in their hearts,—when it is established beyond all question that Jesus of Nazareth is the Mighty God, that He who so sweetly spake, so gently behaved Himself, and so generously died for man, is the very God with whom we have to do,—ah me! what a dark secret is disclosed, even the secret of God Almighty's heart; and how beautiful, and lovely, and generous, and good, is the revelation of it! How worm-eaten and dry-rotted is this great question of the Divinity of Christ become! what verbiage, what clashing of texts, what thin and slippery argument! Why do not they carry the ship out of these shallows into the deep sea, and let her steer a gallant course? It is because they are landsmen, and no mariners, who have got the steering and the commanding of her: and there she lies broken upon the banks, oftener high and dry than in her proper element, beat upon by the sun until all her seams are beginning to open; and soon, very soon, if God send her not a better crew, the gallant ship will be seaworthy no longer, and the country people will come down and break her up for firewood. Come with me, O ye enslaved people! who call man your master, and are giving and taking honour: and look at Jesus of Nazareth sitting in the throne on high, in the eternal throne of the Majesty on high, upbearing God's government and representing God's person; and tell me if He can be less than God who doeth this. But if you want further proof, come and see Him putting a new life into creatures, so that they shall stoutly stem the main strength of creation's drift away from God, set their breast against creation's tumbling, toiling abyss, and rise sublime above it, bearing it aside with an arm stronger than it. But if still this work of regeneration satisfy you not, come with me and see Him raise dead creatures out of dust, and set them up in a life transcending not only Adam's goodly estate, but the estate of angels, and principalities, and powers, and ascending into a glory upon which he that looks shall look upon the glory of God: "I beheld New Jerusalem descending from heaven, having the glory of God." But if it be said by these daring unbelievers, "I see not this now, and what sign and token have you to give of it? it is but your

own dream." And our word-theologians will be as ready with the sceptical retort as any infidel of them all. My answer is, The Church hath a first-fruits of that power, an earnest of that glory, part and parcel of that reward, in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, into which she is baptized. Hear Christ, speaking to her spirit in a way that understanding knoweth not, and edifying her spirit by an intercourse above and beyond all conception, in these men speaking with tongues: hear Him communicating intelligence of the unknown sounds to that other order of men, interpreting these tongues; and behold how the hearts of both are delighted and refreshed, though the understanding be unfruitful. The word may, when it is interpreted, be only some oft-repeated verse of Scripture; but behold it is new to them, because Christ is putting the Spirit of glory into it, and making it prolific of heart-power. Remark that other order of men, in whom Christ is discerning all sorts of evil spirits in the hearts of men: behold how their eyes are reading consciences, and their word is upon the spirits of men, and they are cleansing hearts, and ministering to souls diseased, and casting seven unclean spirits out of possessed men. Wonder to behold that other order of men ruling the waves of the sea, and the winds of heaven, raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and making the lame man to leap like the hart. And oh, hear what strains of meekest wisdom flow from that band, what ocean fulness of knowledge from this; what intrepid faith in the power and presence of Christ is with these, and what gifts of healing with those. And thus offering to the sceptic's observation, the first-fruits of that power and glory, I would ask him if that be not enough to convince him of the creative, and more than creative, power which is in the name of Christ, if that be not a foretaste of a more excellent glory than creation's first estate, awaiting all those who believe in His name. But if he turn upon me and say, Where are these things you speak of in all this world, for as yet I have seen none of them? I can show him the thing upon record as a matter of history in the New Testament. But if he say, I care not about such ancient records: surely God would not have left so great a thing as you speak of to be transmitted through the uncertain channels of eighteen centuries, which have swallowed up mightiest nations: nor am I able by interpretation to construct the glorious thing you speak of, or to get any lively idea of it into my mind; at least such an idea as ought to satisfy one in so great a matter. Alas, alas! I have no answer to make to this. The Church hath lost the witness and testimony of the truth of the glory which is to come. She hath ceased to be the pillar and ground of the truth. All I can say

is, I believe but for our faithlessness this light would not have been darkness; and I trust to our faithfulness it will soon be made light again.

While therefore Christ—as the perfect and all-sufficient man, who hath, by taking the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, and wrought out a perfect righteousness for mankind—is demonstrated unto all men in the work of regeneration, whereby other sons of men are enabled to become sons of God, other men in flesh enabled to overcome flesh, and hold it down in self-inflicted death, and to fulfil the righteousness of the law in walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit; while thus is manifested the certainty that Christ was true man, and holy man, and perfect man, though in mortal flesh and blood subsisting, the Second Adam who alone is able to beget holy men, and to produce God's glory, and perfect God's image in fallen mortal flesh, and fill up the measure of His righteousness, and satisfy His demand of law, and do everything proper to the man-redeemer of man; this is further and far more excellently demonstrated by His possession of the seven Spirits, by His endowment with the seven eyes, the omniscience, and the seven horns, the omnipotence, of God, by His ability to have and to hold, to use and to exercise the all-mightiness, not of the God-creative of this world, but of God-productive of all His purpose, whereof creation was but the first leaf.—(Ah me! what a thought! that man, and the Son of man, should be the orderly leader forth of God's eternal purpose, its doer, its upholder; and that it should be but a chaos, and waste of death, until God in man's nature came to set it up again, to restore and rebuild, and for ever sustain the fabric of the outward fulness of God. I am lost in wonder and admiration, in adoration and praise; I see my nakedness and vileness as a sinner, as a saint my eternal honour and glory. The Lord hath enabled me to conceive and to utter His goodness. My soul is comforted. I cannot, I will not cease to praise Him.)—I say, what further and far more excellent things are manifested by the prerogative in the text expressed, "He who hath the seven Spirits of God," which God hath enabled me to unfold in these few pages, and which I never understood so perfectly before, whereby is shown forth the truth, that God within the bounds and limits of the Church, and the form of the risen God-man, predestinated but not yet realised; real indeed in the fixed purpose, but not in the historical event, did create all things, and doth redeem all things; and, what is infinitely more, will glorify the Church, and by her do with creation all which the Father's utmost beneficence and superabounding grace hath determined to be done. And can it be that my nature hath in it virtues,

powers, and possessions of this grasp and range, and shall be, yea, and is, informed with all the fulness of God, and crowned with the glory of God, and intrusted with the orderly forth-bringing of the purposes and executing of the behests of God. Ah me! what a creature I am formed to be! O Jesus, the world's Redeemer, but man's glorious Brother, Champion of our primitive rights, Captain of our salvation, and Advancer unto God's own throne of our nature, what sacrifices of thanksgiving, what hymns of praise, what adorations, what meditations, are Thy due from man! And yet not Thine, but Thy Father's; for it is to Thy Godhead that the glory of Thy manhood is due; it is to Thee, Son of the Father, very God of very God, that the prerogatives of the Church, head and members, are all due; for in Thy manhood Thou wast like me a conceived child, a born babe, a swathed infant, a man of sorrow and reproach, a martyr, a dead and buried corpse: it is Godhead which brought Thee through the narrow passages and dark abysses of our being, and launched Thee fair and free into that ocean-fulness of the Godhead, where thou bearest us, poor, frail, and sinful creatures, in Thine ark of salvation. Oh that I had the love of the seraphim, and the voice of the cherubim, and the archangel's trump, that I might fitly set forth the glories of Thy works, and the excellences of Thy ways unto the sons of men! Oh my God! anoint me with the oil of joy, fill me with the word of wisdom, and put new songs in my mouth, that I may instruct this generation to know Thy praise, before I go hence and be no more. I am full of matter, but they understand it not; oh make my tongue like the tongue of the learned, that they may say no more, He speaketh parables. Take away their word-wresting, their lying in wait, their going about the city in the evening with eavesdropping purposes; and enlarge their hearts from the possession of envy and malice and ignorance and cruelty, that they may attend upon Thy faithful servants, who are seeking to teach Thy truth unto this generation of Thy children. "How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! Corn shall make the young man cheerful," (to grow or speak, *margin*,) "and new wine the maids."

"*And hath the seven stars.*"

The style of Christ, the Universal Bishop, which He hath preferred to assume in the ear of the angel of the Church of Sardis, is twofold, "Who hath the seven Spirits of God," and "Who hath the seven stars:" whereof the former determineth Him to be the Head of the Church, which is the head of the redeemed creation of God, and proveth Him to have been the Creator of that world which He

not only raiseth from the ruins of death, but also, by means of these seven Spirits, putteth the glorious dome upon it. Now the second part of this style, "Who hath the seven stars," implieth, according to the interpretation of that symbol given in the third lecture, and enlarged upon in the last, that He not only hath the sole possession and occupancy of the Holy Ghost, abstractly considered, but likewise of the same Holy Ghost embodied in the persons whom He hath constituted the angels of the churches. The former is the larger of the two designations, the latter is the more personal and particular of the two; the former hath respect to the fulness, the latter to the first-fruits of that fulness. These seven angels of the churches do in this book represent both the ear which heareth Christ, and the life which declareth His mind to the people, and withal the hand with which He governs and rules His Church, being inclusive of all persons whom God hath set in His Church, whether for word or for work: first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, healings, helps, diversities of tongues. I do not say that he whom Christ addresseth as the angel of a Church did necessarily possess any or all of these administrations of the Holy Ghost, but that as he is the channel of communication between Christ and the Church, in him these subordinate orders are represented just as though a king have neither the knowledge of justice and judgment, which pertaineth to his legal ministers; nor yet of diplomacy, which pertaineth to his ambassadors; nor yet of war, which pertaineth to his commissioned servants of the army and navy; nor yet of government, which pertaineth to his governors of provinces and of kingdoms; yet is he regarded of God as the channel of his gifts to a nation, and holden responsible for the actings and doings of all these several departments into which the prerogative royal is subdivided. When Christ therefore saith, "I am He which hath the seven stars," He must be understood to put in a claim, not only to the rulers and heads of the churches, but likewise to all the gifted persons of every name and order through whom any manifestation of the Spirit is made for the benefit of the whole; and in making such a claim, he must be understood at once to demand the homage of these gifted persons, and the thanksgivings of the Church for such diverse channels of good, conveying to them power from their Great Head, unto whom all power in heaven and in earth is committed. Yet, when taken at its fulness, the gift of the Holy Ghost thus distributed by many living channels throughout the living body of Christ, is but a first-fruits of that harvest which shall be reaped when the Son of man cometh sitting on the cloud with a crown upon His head, and a sharp sickle

in His hand. Then, indeed, shall the Church put on her beautiful garments, and rise from the lowly bed of death to be the mistress of the house of God and the queen of the realm of creation. When the Holy Ghost in His completeness, in that completeness which can never be added to, shall display His utmost power of life, in bringing forth from the dust of corruption, the living city of the New Jerusalem, fit abode of God, and furnished with the fulness of His glory; then shall the Holy Ghost stand perfectly expressed, and hence shall creation drink the radiancy of light and the river of life. But into this fountain of light and life shall no new particle of glory enter, nor shall its consummate completeness be ever diminished, for it is the seven Spirits of God embodied in the body of Christ. All this resplendent orb of light and life, which shall concentrate within itself and give forth to creation's utmost bounds the whole of Godhead-beauty and blessedness which shall ever be expressed. The Church hath in her angels, stars to rule the night until the morning star, the Shechinah glory, burst upon the terrified nations, being the harbinger of the coming day, which scattereth the spirits of darkness that now trouble the world's peace; whereupon the stars shall no longer appear, but lose themselves in that one globe of light, the New Jerusalem, which containeth all the saints of God, both the ministers and the people. I cannot help observing the perfectness of the symbol, which, in its broken fragments, we have ofttimes had occasion to explain, and which we would now recompose into one beautiful and harmonious whole. The days of creation were not mornings and evenings, but evenings and mornings: "and the evening and the morning was the first day;" and so also is it with the new creation of Christ the quickening Spirit, who having possessed Himself by purchase of blood, of creation-lordship, and being seated on the throne of God to make of the redeemed creation what seemeth good in His sight; and to this end, being possessed of the seven Spirits of God, doth bring out the order of His work by an evening and a morning. The evening, the stilly evening, is the season which hath run since He entered into His rest, and during which, like Isaac, He walketh forth meditating upon the earth, and receiving the bride whom His Father hath provided for Him; during which season He hath the stars to rule the night: and the stars are the angels of the churches, messengers of grace, guides of weary travellers and mariners tossed upon the sea. And as these stars were led forth like a flock by the Star of Bethel, the Shepherd of Israel, who shineth forth from between the cherubim, the true Lucifer, at once the star of even and the star of morn, so shall their seasons of rule be ended by the re-

appearance of that star of Bethel, as the star of Jacob, the morning star, who now, gathering into Himself the whole lights of the heavens, shall shine alone His short hour flaming in the forehead of the morning sky. Then shall the earth be refreshed with the dew, and its solitary places begin to be verdant and to expect the cherishing heat of the orb of day; whereupon the light of the glory of God, the New Jerusalem that cometh down from heaven, shall arise and shine, for her light is come, and the glorious God is risen upon her, in whose light the nations of them which are saved shall walk: "For the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." And then the day dawns which shall know no decline at all, nor night at all. And now of creation may it be said in the language of the prophet Isaiah, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended," (lx. 19, 20.)

We conceive, therefore, that Christ, in this fifth style which He takes unto Himself, doth claim both the lights which He hath set in the Church during this season of the world's darkness, and that complete light which He shall be unto His Church when the season of her darkness is ended, and the morning star of the epiphany in the cloud hath brought in the eternal day of the New Jerusalem and the world's blessedness. And with respect to the application of this style to the case of the angel of the Church of Sardis, wherefore the great Shepherd should have chosen it rather than any other, we have to observe, that this Church was beset with the temptations of nominalism, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead;"—of slothfulness, and heedlessness, and indifference to the future, "Be watchful;" "if therefore thou wilt not repent;"—of weakness, "Strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die;"—of shortcoming in obedience, "I have not found thy works perfect before God;"—of great abuse of privilege, "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent:" and being in such a state of weakness and unprofitableness, of heedlessness and deadness, Christ presenteth Himself as possessed of all the power of God for strengthening and reviving the weak, and of right in all the ministers of the Church, if possible to awake His servant to the sense of his responsibility, and the shame of his wickedness. As if He had said, "Arouse thyself, my servant, for in me thy strength is found: awake, arise from the dead, and I will give thee light. Call upon thy

Church to seek help from the Head. I am the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Ye are not straitened in me, ye are straitened through your own unbelief. The fountains of the Spirit are all open to thee as at the first. All thy well-springs are in me. Why then, O thoughtless, thankless shepherd! art thou so far departed from thy first estate? Why standest thou all the day idle? And why with folded hands dost thou weary my patience, and bring upon thyself the fierceness of my judgments?" But the pointedness of the application will the better appear as we proceed to open the epistle itself.

II. THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH.

If, as we are strongly inclined to believe, for the reasons laid down above, this Sardis state of the Church be that into which the work of the Reformation is now come, and in which the churches called Reformed are now sitting, then are these instructions to the angel of that Church most important to such of the ministers of the churches of Scotland and England as prefer with me to rank under those ecclesiastical constitutions of doctrine and discipline delivered unto us by the Reformers, rather than to adopt the unfledged views and fluctuating notions of the religious populace, known by the name Evangelical, and to be carried about by every wind of doctrine which they issue in their periodical publications. There are still a goodly number both of the ministers and people of this land who cleave to the forms and habits and associations which gathered around the Church at the time of the Reformation, having a holy abhorrence of the Papacy, a deep veneration of the catholic Church, a reverend esteem of the Christian ministry, a deep feeling of the sacredness of the ordinances, and a dutiful observance of the customs and ceremonies of religion. Indeed, there are whole provinces of Scotland, and England too, which have never been visited with evangelical liberalism, and hardly know that such a thing exists as is counted for religion in our large towns; which still look upon the creeds of the Church as the rule of orthodoxy, not the columns of a newspaper, and regard the heart, and the closet, and the fireside, as the proper seats of religion—not the saloons of fashion, public meetings, and committee-rooms,—who look up to the pulpit as the appointed channel of instruction, and the world as the appointed place for practising it, and who can be religious without either a Bible society, or a missionary society, or even a school society amongst them! To these regions of the Church where old Matthew Henry has not given place to Scott, nor Luther to Wesley, nor Hooker to the religious reports, nor Guthrie to Newton, it is my

calling now to address instruction from this letter to the angel of the Church of Sardis; as it will be hereafter my duty under the Laodicean epistle to address my reproof to the evangelical, at once the lowest and most grovelling, yet most pretending, form of godliness which hath ever appeared. The Roman apostasy flowed in through decay of love, yielded a noble army of martyrs, then nursed a set of corrupt and sensual doctors, and ended in permitting the false prophetess to have her will and her way in the Church of God, wherein she now sitteth as a queen, saying, I shall see no sorrow. The Protestant liberalism, or infidelity, flowed in through the vain-glory and hollowness of a name, yieldeth a loving band of brothers, mighty in word and witness, and is consummated in the supremacy not of a woman but of the populace. The Roman apostasy is the woman, or the Church triumphing over Christ. The Protestant apostasy is the people drowning with their multitudinous voice all voice of God, and of Christ, and of the Church. To stay this madness of the people, to encourage that little band of brothers, who are making their voice to be heard in the Philadelphian Church, and, if possible, to draw them fresh supplies of men, both from the wrecks of the Sardis, and the beginnings of the Laodicean Church, this is the good and gracious and glorious object which God now yieldeth unto me His servant in the exposition of these three epistles.

As there is nothing so excellent as a good name when it speaks the goodness of the inward man, expressing truly and fully unto the ear of others that secret and hidden man of the heart, which having heard of they may come and prove and be satisfied; so is there nothing more pernicious, than to assume in name, what in reality we are not, and to hold forth in the ears and eyes of men, pretensions and appearances, which we would have them to receive and rest upon, whereas they are but baits to catch the unwary, or traps and gins planted for their destruction. The first and most precious of all things is an honest heart; and the next is a truth-speaking tongue, and unpretending face. God, containing within Himself the fountain and fulness of all perfection, did from the beginning put forth the same under various names, whereof the three chief be these: God, the God of Abraham, and Jehovah; the first, signifying His goodness to all creation: the second, His love to the Church; the third, His unchangeable and irresistible faithfulness. This name of God, in many ways expressed, the world of wicked spirits, wicked men, and wicked things, strove together to obscure and to falsify, bringing the creation to be not an orderly fabric of goodness, but a confused mass of wickedness; Abraham and the Church to be, apparently, not the blessed, but the cursed ones of God; God's promises to be,

not very faithfulness, but seeming defeat and disappointment; for man, His image, lies low in dust and corruption; Abraham and the chosen seed outcast from the chosen land, and the chosen city, and the chosen mount of God,—not the kings and priests, but the outcasts and off-scourings of men. The name of God lay like an Egyptian hieroglyphic, hid in darkness, yea, like the name of a liar, without honour; like the promise of a deceiver, without faith: till He came whose work it was by His former coming to glorify the name of God: "I have glorified Thy name, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." This work of reclaiming the name of God from dishonour and distrust, did Jesus accomplish by presenting man, as man ought ever to have been, pure and holy, a reflection in all His being of the very being of God; and He did, moreover, by keeping the law, and winning the inheritance, prove God to be Abraham's God; and by overcoming death, and redeeming creation, and casting the devil out, He did prove God to be Jehovah, who changeth not, and will make good what He intended from the beginning, and all along declareth in His Word; and now God's name is placed through the work of Christ beyond all suspicion, and His promises to mankind beyond all doubt; and for this excellent service, by the Son of man performed, "God hath given Him a name above every name,"—a name which is a passport unto heaven, and opens the treasury of God unto the poorest petitioner; so that whatsoever we shall ask the Father in His name, He will give it to us. Such high store doth God set upon a name, that He threw forth His own substantial being in the form of a name, for men to trust on, in spite of all gainsaying appearances; and men were saved, and were perfected, and were delivered according as they trusted in the dishonoured and rejected name of God. And Christ was perfect, complete in all things, wanting nothing, because He trusted ever and entirely in the repudiated name of God. He glorified God's name by believing that behind it was God's being; and so He was delivered out of all temptations; and such unstaggering faith had He, such steadfast confidence, because His person was Divine, though His subsistence flesh: he knew God by knowing Himself; His person baffled His circumstances; His person overcame His nature, the devil, and the world. If any man ask how I know that Jesus of Nazareth was God? I answer, Because Jesus of Nazareth never doubted one word of God, though His human nature, and the round world, and the spirits of delusion and darkness strove, with might and main, to shake His Jehovah-faith in Jehovah's faithfulness. An honest man alone can believe an honest man in this dishonest world. God alone can believe God in this godless world. Well said a friend

to me, It is like casting yourself over a precipice to believe in God; and he might have added, and that no one will, nor can do, but by God doing it in Him. What is a believer? One in whom Christ's life is; that is, God's life. And what is the fruit of God's life in a believer? The fruit of God's life in a believer is, to believe. Christ believing in the name of God, which had become empty as the echo, earned for Himself the honours of a name—the honours of a co-equal name—so that it is no longer God's name which goeth about the world seeking credit, but the names of God and of Christ go hand in hand. God says, "Believe in Him whom I have sent, and believe on Me." Christ says, "Believe in God who sent Me, and believe in Me." Conjunction most glorious! unto which the Spirit beareth eternal testimony; and not the Spirit only, but the water and blood, that is, the baptized Church and the redeemed world. The Church with water baptized, the world by blood redeemed.

Such, then, being the glories of a name, behold at once the honour and the dishonour, the grace and the guilt, of the Sardian Church, set for the testimony of the truth which had become obscured and falsified by the words and works of Jezebel, that mother of harlots and prophetess of falsehood. The false apostles, the Balaamite doctors, and the Nicolaitane professors, had brought the true Church of Christ into as great perversity and obscurity, as ever was God's name by the idolatries and traditions of the world, out of which Christ retrieved its grace and truth; for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." When things had come to such a pass in the Christian Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, not accidentally connected with, but coming forth of, the substance of Christ, and an integrant part of the eternal purpose of God, it well became the care of God and of Christ to raise up men of renown, who should separate the good from the evil, and lift up single-handed witness like Christ's own, against those hordes of saints, doctors, and monks of every name, who had overspread the face of the Church with all filthy and hideous disguises. (Ye birds of darkness, how I rejoice to see your vile and gloomy habitations ransacked in these days by the hands of the destroyer. O ye deceivers, ye are at length exposed. O ye false and treacherous dealers, they are now dealing treacherously with you. I rejoice, I do and I will rejoice, to see these Romish priests, these prophets of Baal, these priests of Moloch; for their worship was unholy as Beor and cruel as Moloch: I rejoice to see you scattered to the winds of heaven. "Double to her double according to her works; in the cup that she hath filled, fill to her double;" Hallelujah!) This evil

confederacy which had overcome the Church, that horrible perdition to which it was doomed, to expose and express in word, was the calling of the heads of the Reformation, whereby they obtained unto themselves and the churches which they planted, the glory of a name: and to that name are they well entitled; for next to the work which Christ wrought in redeeming the name of God from the oppression of idolatry and falsehood of error, was that work which the Reformers wrought, in delivering the name of Christ, in His Church, from those sevenfold deceptions with which it had become altogether defamed. It was a high vocation, and well and faithfully did they labour therein, whereby the Protestant Church became renowned, and Luther might, with more truth than vanity, well begin his last will and testament with these words, "I, Martin Luther, of note in heaven, and earth, and hell;" and still better with a prophetic foresight was that wish of his, that his books might not live after him; I say with the prophetic foresight of that worship of a name which was to become the downfall of the work which he had so gloriously begun; for truly how well it may be said of all the churches called Reformed, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name to live and art dead." To hear the Church of Scotland talk, you would suppose that she was still the same with her who attacked the dragon in his den, and drove him in terror from her land: who brake the chains of darkness, and shook them off as a strong man doth the bonds of sleep in the morning. To hear them talk who rule the synagogue, you would think that she was the same who endured almost a full century of persecution and bloodshed for the truth; and, what is higher pretension still, you would suppose that she is still the same who opened the treasuries of God to a needy people, and made them rich in all spiritual good, who threw the cords of God and of Christ over a stout, self-willed, mighty, and indomitable people: whereas, what is the truth? The truth is briefly expressed in the text, "She hath a name to live, and is dead." There are no such men as the Knoxes and the Melvilles of a former age. There are indeed imitators of their defects and deformities; men who have imbibed the radicalism and insubordination which deform their noble character, and think to build for themselves a similar name by enacting the part of bravoes, and running a-muck against the holy ordinances of good order and government. There is no such gospel preached as did then enlighten the darkness, and break the bonds of the human mind. Their gospel is the name of a gospel, but without the power: they take unto themselves the name of preaching the gospel to every creature under heaven; but when you take it to task there is in it no good news to every crea-

ture, no, nor unto any creature under heaven,—for they preach a benefit from God in Christ, to an unknown and unknowable portion of mankind, which is a benefit to no one, forasmuch as no one can know whether or not he be among the number. They take the name of preaching the electing love of God, and therein think that they magnify His sovereignty and His holiness, in passing by the wicked whom it pleaseth Him not, and choosing the wicked whom it pleaseth Him, to save. But truly they do magnify neither His holiness nor His sovereignty; not His holiness, because, by confounding redemption with election, and regarding them as one thing, they make God to elect without any respect to a redemption received by some, and rejected by others, without respect to a righteousness presented to all, but received by some and rejected by others. Neither do they magnify His sovereignty, which is to choose whom He pleaseth to choose, because they make the redeemed to be only as many as the elected. But if it should be said that God, having a purpose of election for certain, sendeth Christ to redeem only so many, then do they destroy the love of God to man, as man, and the manifestation of God to men in Christ, as their God. For if Christ be only God manifested as an electing God, then is God, as a God loving His creatures, not manifested at all. He is manifested as a God making distinctions; but the principle on which He makes them is not manifested. It is God the head of destiny, it is man the creature of destiny, whom this their abominable doctrine of particular redemption setteth forth. And I might go through every other doctrine, as at present preached in our Church, and show that it is but a fallacious name: and this I will do, if God permit, in some separate treatise; for these convictions are not given to be hidden, but to be proclaimed on the house-tops, and, if need be, under the gallows tree. Again, to hear the Church of England speak, you might suppose that her bishops were men, worthy to stand in the room of the Latimers, and Ridleys, and Hoopers, and Andrews, and Jewels; whereas, in general, the truth being told, they know not what be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and lie land-locked in the miserable shallows of Arminianism, or shipwrecked on the rocks of Pelagianism. Such thriftless waste of words as go to make up the sum total of their preaching. And for discipline, if it be in use at all, in either of the national churches, it is for the end of restraining, fettering, and casting out, any one who distinguisheth himself for his orthodoxy and faithfulness. And for ecclesiastical government, it is in our Church a continual contest of parties; in the Church of England, an usurpation of the rights of the clergy by a few prelates with no higher nor better orders than themselves. So totally in-

different is our Church become to the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the office and order of Deacons hath ceased, and that of Elders come into as great a state of secularity as any order in the Church of Rome. And yet the magic of these names, Church of England and Church of Scotland, and the credit of our excellent standards, and our admirable Confession and Catechisms, and the Liturgy, and the Canons, and other things of the like kind, carry with them the continual impression, that all things are standing in the same state in which they were, when these forms of truths were composed and enacted. That name, that good and glorious name which the Reformed Churches purchased for themselves, with the price of all their mind, and all their heart, and all their life devoted unto God, we now live upon; and, forgetting what we are, nor caring to look into the poor remnant which is left us, we, with a dishonesty equalled only by our pride, continually appeal to the empty name, saying, "Are not we the churches which cast down the Papacy, and set forth the forms of true doctrine and righteous discipline on the earth?" There is nothing like this feature in the Roman apostasy, which is the same mother of abominations and prophetess of lies as it ever was. It has no claim to be changed: it is an unchanged and unchangeable system of wickedness. But the Protestant Churches are changed: they are in no respect whatever the thing which they were; yet they pretend to be the same; they have a name to live, and are dead.

So true is this felt to be, that, when the evangelical form of the Church came into existence, it began its course by denominating what it found in existence *nominal* Christianity; and when they would take a distinction between themselves and others, it is in this very way they do it, calling themselves evangelical, and others nominal Christians. It is to these nominal Christians, and to these nominal ministers, that the instructions of our Lord in this epistle are addressed; and very remarkable it is that He should have anything kind to say to those "who have a name to live, but are dead." One should think that He, who is truth, would be so disgusted with such vile hypocrisy as to pass them by with silent contempt, or cover them with indignant reproach. Not so! And why not so? Because not only truth, but grace, came by Jesus Christ. He glorified the name of God; which name is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." That reverence for a name which still subsisted in the angel of the Church of Sardis, is still a spark which Jesus would blow into a holy flame, because he that is fullest of grace, is ever fullest of hope. Well was it written of Him, "The smoking flax shall He not

quench, nor break the bruised reed;" and let me, who am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoes, imitate the high and noble example of charity which He setteth before me. Ah me, were those calling themselves evangelical possessed of His spirit, would they thus entreat the nominal professor, as if He were an unbaptized heathen, or an excommunicated publican? Let us who think ourselves spiritual, turn to the example of our Lord, and learn how to treat those, whom we have too good reason to believe, are but nominal Christians. The angel of Sardis, not in the judgment of man, but in the judgment of Him who cannot lie, was a nominal minister, and the head of a Church consisting mostly of nominal professors; and yet hear how kindly, courteously, and faithfully, the Good Shepherd dealeth with him and his people: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent," (iii. 2, 3.)

The first part of this exhortation is unto watchfulness, pointing out to us at once the cause, and the remedy, of all declension in the Divine life, which God intrusteth unto every one of His children, to be reared up to the stature of the perfect man, by a diligent use of all the means of grace, and watchful observation of all the temptations and injuries to which it is exposed. For as in natural, so in spiritual things, no child will grow and thrive unless there be a continual care and watchfulness, first of the mother, then of the nurse, then of the master, and finally of itself; and what is true of a person is true of the pastor of a flock. It is of the nature of a flock to increase, and to grow into more flocks through the watchfulness of the shepherd; and if it should decrease, and be ready to die out, it argues want of care and watchfulness on the part of the shepherd. Whether, therefore, you respect the angel of the Church of Sardis in his personal or pastoral character, it was both wisely and graciously said unto him, "Be watchful;" and this word Christ speaketh to every idle shepherd, who, seeking a good name, doth neglect good works,—or, having a good name, is grown indifferent to the eye of God, who seeth not as man seeth, but judgeth righteous judgment. To those respectable ministers who seek and find the world's favour, and are exceeding fearful to transgress the bounds of worldly prudence, or to be found in any extravagance from the broad way of common resort and good repute, Christ saith, "Be watchful." Be watchful over what?—over thy reputation with me, over thy standing with Him to whom the seven stars belong. As if He had said, "Mine thou art by purchase" (for even the reprobate He hath bought, 2 Pet. ii. 1); "and mine thou art by office and preferment,

being the strength of my right hand; and mine thou art by commission, for I have committed to thee the cure of souls; therefore, be thou watchful. Take heed unto thyself, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made thee overseer, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." And if thou want supply of the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind, behold the Seven Spirits of God, which are mine for thee, and for all who will receive and use them for the ends of edifying the Church which is my fulness. Betake thyself to thy calling, thou heedless shepherd, and fear not to be supplied with the needful strength. Look thou to my Father's chosen ones, and I will look to thee. But if thou wilt go about to seek honour of thy fellow-worms, thou shalt never be able to receive "the honour which cometh from God." Ah me! how needful is this exhortation of the Lord in these days, when the fear of public opinion, the brand of being singular and alone, the odium of being evil-spoken of, hath eaten out, not only the communion of ministers with their rejected and despised Head, but even the personal dignity of responsible men. We are men no longer, but pieces of a machine—parts of a frame-work set up to catch the observation and excite the wonder of the multitude. To make a fair show in the flesh, to win a high name, or to appropriate to ourselves the name which our predecessors in the Church have won, to live idly and hypocritically upon their hard earnings, this is the deep-seated mischief which preys upon the vitals of the Christian ministry in these Protestant Churches. There is no remedy but one, which is, to remember that not the people nor the ministry, but the Lord, is our Master; to remember the prerogative of Christ expressed in these words, "These things saith He which hath the seven stars." We are His property, and not the property of the people, or of any earthly powers whatsoever. If there be anything, in this office which I fill, peculiar and proper and essential to it, it is this, that it is responsible to no one but Christ. As we have so oft asserted and proved in these lectures, the authorities of the Church do not stand between the minister and Christ. He has no business to be thinking of them, but of Christ, and labouring for Christ in the ministry of the flock; and if the authorities of the Church would interfere to prevent him from declaring the doctrines and executing the commandments of Christ, he must obey the Head rather than the members, and look upon the members as rising up in insurrection against the Head. He may be wrong in thus doing, and the Church may be right in preventing him; but to come to such personal determination, and act out his office under such personal responsibility, is his duty; and because there are perils in the way

of our duty, is not to prevent the undertaking of it, and the going through with it also. The authorities of the Church with which he holdeth communion may take upon them to resent this his self-determining liberty of action, and may exert against him her extremest discipline, even to the greater excommunication: she is required on her responsibility to do so, and she doth it at her peril; and when the angel of a Church is thus entreated by the Church, it is his duty to receive his chastisement meekly, to be put out of the synagogue; and, so that he seeth it to be for Christ's sake, gladly to go forth without the camp bearing His reproach. But what then; is he to cease labouring in his vocation of declaring the truth because the Church, according to his conviction, hath rejected him for holding it? While that conviction lasts, he is only the more strenuously to declare it, that the Church may not deceive the world, betray the truth, and dishonour God. This is the great spiritual weapon of Protestantism: it is good to search it out from among the rubbish of antiquated notions, and to burnish it for action, because I fear it will be soon called into use again. This is not insubordination to authorities, but testifying for the greater authority of Christ. It is not schism, but testimony for the truth. It is not apostasy, but the only way of preventing the Church from apostasy. It is the dignity of a person, it is the inalienable right of a responsible person; whereof an angel of the Church is set on high in his place, to give an example to all other persons whatever.

The second part of this exhortation to the minister of the Church of Sardis, directeth his watchfulness into the channel of "strengthening the things which remain," as the right way of recovering those things which lay buried in neglect. There was still some remnant of a Church in Sardis which the Saviour did not despise, and to the care of which He calleth the nominal bishop of the Church; just as Jeremiah called the last king of Israel to use well the fragments of power which remained to him, with the assurance, that if he would obey his voice and observe God's Sabbaths, it would be well with him and his posterity, notwithstanding all the threatenings of the Lord. What these things were in the Church of Sardis which remained in a dying state, we are not informed, though I think from what follows it may be inferred that they were works of some kind, seeing it is immediately added as the reason of the exhortation, "for I have not found thy works perfect before God." To do good works is the calling of a Christian and a Christian Church. The truth as it is in Jesus is the light in which he is to perform them, and faith in the operation of God through Jesus Christ is the strength; but the works are the end for which the light shineth and the power is given: "Let your light

so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." It is by our works that the world is to know the excellency of our profession, for as yet they are ignorant of the doctrine of salvation; and it is by our works that we shall eventually be judged of God. Now of all good works, love to God and Christ and the souls of men is the informing principle, without which they may not be called good, of whatever appearance and form they be. Proceeding from custom, or man-pleasing, or the desire of a good name, or fear of God's wrath and the desire to propitiate His mercy, they are not good and acceptable unto Him, whom they acknowledge not as the supreme good, neither hold forth to men as the origin, the end, and the object of all goodness. Any work, to be good, must proceed from a heart which God hath made good; that is, a heart which God hath filled with love, for love is the forthgoing of goodness. Now the angel of the Church of Sardis was consulting not for love, but for a good name. Like the Scribes and the Pharisees, he was doing his alms to be seen of men; and he had his reward of men, but not of "our Father which is in heaven." This worm in the bud of them all was, I take it, the ground of their imperfection, as well as the incompleteness of their amount. For they wanted in quality as well as in quantity; they were defective in kind as well as in number. The expression "before God" confirms me in the idea that there ran through all his works a radical defect, arising from respect to the opinions of men. His Master doth not quarrel with their aspect before men, but with their aspect before God. It is most likely that this well-approven bishop, who had a name to live, was the most respectable of all the seven in the sight of men; that he was a good man and a perfect bishop in the eyes of the world, and had their approbation in all respects. I know many such, of whom the world doth nothing but speak well; and if the word of the Lord be true, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," I much fear for these that their works cannot at the same time be "perfect before God." Without arrogating to man the Divine prerogative of judging the heart, we may without any hesitation pronounce that the favour of the world, the voice of public opinion, is not compatible with the voice and approbation of God; for the Lord putteth the world and the Church into express contradiction, the one of the other. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have

overcome the world." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." These, with many other passages, and indeed the whole tenor of Scripture upon the subject, point it out as an everlasting truth, that the approbation of God and the approbation of the world are two things altogether incompatible with one another, and that he who enjoys the one may assure himself he doth not enjoy the other. This is a searching and trying truth, which is greatly abused by evil-tempered and schismatical men; but it is not the less a truth of God for the guidance and consolation of Christian and Catholic men. And it is the truth which, above all others, should be pressed upon the consideration of those ministers of the gospel who enjoy the good report of those that are without.

In applying this truth to practice, there is no small difficulty, arising from the intermixture of the Church and the world in one heterogeneous mass of baptized persons, including the whole population of the kingdom. From the total breaking down of discipline, and the indiscriminate administration of baptism to all, it is left to every one to distinguish for himself between the Church and the world, of whom the good opinion of the former should be our encouragement, and the good opinion of the latter our discouragement, in the ways of righteousness. In the midst of this confusion, there are one or two considerations which may help a man's judgment, though nothing can supply the want of discipline in the Church. The first of these is, that the Church is "the little flock;" the world the multitude; the way of truth the narrow way, which few find,—the way of lies, the broad way in which many walk. If therefore the many of the baptized nation be with a man, he may fear that he himself is not with God. And instead of things growing better in the latter days, towards the coming of the Lord, they grow worse; insomuch that, when the Lord cometh, it shall be a question whether He shall find faith on the earth. A second help to discern our way, in the midst of the existing confusion, is by feeling whether we suffer persecution for the sake of the truth which we hold; for it is written, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Do those who profess to care for none of these things; the politicians, the statesmen, and the economists, the fashionable, the busy, the literary, and the religious worlds; in one word, the worldly classes of the community; do they sympathise with us, or do they cast our names out as evil, and cover us with their reproaches? Do the oracles of wickedness which issue from day to day, and from week to week, and from month to month, take part with us or against us? For there is no fellowship between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between God and Mammon. There is a third test of a

nicer kind, to which our Lord himself directeth His disciples, in these words: "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." When the synagogues and churches of the land have come to include the whole community without discrimination, it is most manifest that they cannot be in a fitter condition for enacting the evil here foretold. The public opinion is become the Church opinion; the world and the Church are visibly blended in one. It may be that the world's evil inclination will be somewhat prevented by the mixture of the Church; it is certain that the good disposition of the Church will be weakened, and in the end destroyed. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." And the effect will be, that when one standeth up amongst them with the words of Christ in his mouth, and the ways of Christ in his heart, he will so rebuke their evil deeds, and worldly compromises, that they will not bear him, but will speak evil of him, and cast him forth from the midst of them, as a blasphemer of God, and a hater of men. And, to such a pitch will his uncompromising faithfulness and godlike charity excite the enmity of the natural man within them, that they will come at length, as the Jews and Romanists did, to count it a service done to God, to make away with him from the face of the earth. Now let men consider whether in the midst of this heterogeneous mixture, named the Church, they prove these trials, and they shall be able to discern whether their name is good before men or before God; whether their works are perfect before men or before God.

While we thus do our best, in the midst of the hideous corruption and inextricable confusion of Church and world, to obtain the correction and safeguard which there is in the approbation of the righteous, and the disapprobation of the world, we ought to be careful not to treat baptized persons as the unbaptized world; from whom they differ in privilege and responsibility in the same way as, and to a far higher degree than, circumcised Israel differed from the uncircumcised nations. Men are in all cases much changed by being baptized, either for the better or for the worse: for the better, if they know and enjoy their privileges, and walk in their duties; for the worse, if they do not. And when it so happens that a baptized Church is chiefly and almost entirely of the latter sort, then is it the most miserable quarters for a godly man upon the face of the whole earth. He will find there more scorn, more falsehood, more cruelty, more that is against nature, than amongst the most savage nations of the world. There is nothing on earth half so fiendish as a Church which hath resolved to walk according to the flesh. "Where receivedst thou these wounds? In the house of my friends."—In what I have

set forth above, therefore, let me not be thought to gainsay, what I have so often said concerning the awful reality there is in baptism, and the entire change it makes in a man's standing: I have but endeavoured to help a child of God, out of the dilemma of having to do with such a hideous mixture as the visible Church is become through our neglect; and showing him, how still he may obtain the safeguard of the approbation of the brethren, while he is preserved from the delusion of thinking that he hath it, when he is borne upon the shoulders of the irreligious mob, which the visible Church hath become. But the best way of all is, for every minister to do his endeavour to restore discipline, to stand stoutly up to the canons of the Church, and insist upon a blameless walk and conversation in every one who sits down at the table of the Lord. And this he will best do by exhibiting to the consciences of all, the awful sacredness of the the sacraments, and following up the word of preaching with a word of counsel and rebuke, and in the train of this bring up the authority of discipline; and, if need be, its severity also, which can as little be wanted in a Church, as chastisement can be wanted in a family, or pains and penalties in a state.

Next to the subject of standing well with men, and so ceasing to stand well with God, suggested by this second part of the exhortation, is the standard which our Shepherd and Judge sets before His servant, "perfectness before God," after which to shape and by which to estimate His works: "For I have not found thy works perfect before God." Nothing can be more demonstrative that the standard with which Christ measures is the standard of perfection; that nothing short of it will satisfy Him, and that everything short of it is to be confessed and mourned over, and with all diligence made up. But where are the means, and wherein is the supply? Let the style adopted by the Chief Shepherd furnish the answer: "These things saith he that hath the Seven Spirits of God." Hath them for what? For the Church, to which He is given crowned with that surpassing glory for a Head; and she given to Him to have and to hold the fulness of power and glory which is in the Head: "and hath put all under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all unto the Church, which is His fulness, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Now if there be in the Head the sevenfold perfection of the Spirit of God, why should there not be the same in each of the members? For no reason else than that these members either know it not; or, knowing it, believe it not; or, believing it, keep it not in memory; or, keeping it in memory, fail to act upon it. When God graciously informeth us that Christ, filled with all the fulness of the Godhead which in body can be expressed, is the Head of the

Church, which is His body, whereof we are members; we, receiving this gracious revelation, are that instant rendered responsible for the possession of the fulness, and, being so, are by the same token expected to be complete in Him, and to grow up into Him in all things. This is the reason why perfection is, and must ever be, looked for by God, from the weakest and wickedest of men, when he joineth himself, and is by God joined to Christ in the sacrament of baptism: and for God to expect less, would be either to declare that the gift in Christ is not for communication; or that, being for communication, it is not equal to the work of triumphing over the imperfection and sinfulness of the creature.

There hath of late been introduced a most baneful method of bringing out perfect holiness before God, by saying that the creature can do, or can be made to do, no good or acceptable thing whatsoever; but, regenerate and endow him as you may, he yieldeth an imperfect and polluted action at all times, which God could not by any means accept on its own account as righteous, but which he accepteth as righteous on account of the righteousness of Christ. This, which is in everybody's mouth, hath so many errors in it, that I hardly know where to begin the enumeration of them. First, it makes God call that which is unholy holy. Now what is unholy is sinful, and cannot by any addition be made holy; it may be forgiven of God, but approven it cannot be. That it is forgiven to the believer because of Christ I fully admit; but that it is called righteous for Christ's sake, I utterly deny. Secondly, it makes Christ have a power of righteousness which he doth put into action through the believer, but which fails to produce one righteous action; and to remedy this failure, a store of inactive righteousness, a treasury, a reservoir of merit, which he keeps in reserve to make weight, and so bring up the defectiveness of the believer's works to the standard of God's absolute perfection. Which is to present us with a Head who holds back His strength from the members out of mere reserve, and who puts forth what he does put forth only to be baffled, and so patches up the matter out of the remainder of merits which he took care to keep beside himself. Such conclusions! Thirdly, it denies the nature of the regenerate man to be holy in himself, and contradicts all Scripture; and it denies that the regenerate man doth good works, and that he fulfils the righteousness of the law, and that he is anything else than a sinner,—not so great, indeed, as the carnal man, but still thoroughly and in all particulars a sinner! Oh! what a wickedness is contained in that common form of humble or rather pharisaical words: "We do nothing good—our best actions are evil, and accepted of God only for the righteousness of Christ." They

are either accepted or not accepted: if accepted, they are the work of Christ in us, the fruit and offspring of the regenerate man; if not accepted, they are the works of the flesh, altogether sinful in God's sight, and the proper subject of godly sorrow, and repentance, and remission. But that good works are done, and ought ever to be done, by the regenerate, is manifest, both from the requirements and declarations of all Scripture; as, for example,—Gen. vi. 9; xvii. 1; Ex. xix. 6: 2 Kings xx. 3: Job. i. 1–8: Ps. xv. 1, 2; xxxvii. 3, 27, 37; ci. 2–6: Ezek. xiv. 14: Matt. v. 48; xvi. 27: John xiv. 23; xv. 3: Rom. xii. 1, 2: 1 Cor. vii. 15, 19, 20: 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11; v. 15, 17; vi. 16–18: Gal. ii. 29: Eph. i. 4; ii. 10; vi. 8: Phil. ii. 12–16: Col. i. 10, 22, 28; iv. 12: 1 Thess. iii. 13; v. 23: 2 Thess. ii. 13–17: 1 Tim. ii. 2–10; v. 10, 25; vi. 18: 2 Tim. ii. 19, 21; iii. 17; iv. 18: Tit. ii. 7, 12, 14: Heb. x. 22-24; xi. 5; xii. 10, 11, 14; xiii. 21; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; ii. 9; iii. 10–17; v. 10: 2 Pet. ii. 7–9: 1 John ii. 5, 6, 29; iii. 6–9, 22: 3 John 11: Jude 24: Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19, 23, 26; iii. 8, 15; xiv. 13; xx. 12.

We maintain, therefore, that in virtue of these Seven Spirits, of that complete Godhead power which is in the Head of the body for distribution throughout all the members, every member, whatever be his office, ought to present a perfect work before God. In our observations upon these Seven Spirits, we referred them chiefly to the heavenly glory into which Christ hath entered, and of which the Church received a first-fruits on the day of Pentecost, to fit her out for the perilous voyage on which she was then launched, of bearing credible witness to all nations, of a world which had been redeemed by Christ, and was about to be blessed with the presence and benefit of His glory in the New Jerusalem, which is to come down from heaven. While we thus interpret the Seven Spirits as distinguished from the Spirit of Christ, the former the life of the heavenly glorified things, the latter of the earthly holy things, we are far from supposing that both are not equally and alike the work of the one indivisible Holy Ghost. To set this great truth forth in its completeness, there are three manifestations of the Holy Ghost: the first is creation, which is not the sevenfold, because it is capable of increase; the second is regeneration, which is the Spirit triumphant over a rebellious creation, and enforcing it to obey the will of God; the third is glorification, which is the creature purged from all wickedness, and filled with all the fulness of God: but all these worketh the self-same Spirit upon the self-same substance, originating in nothing, and drawn through these successive stages of progress towards the full accomplishment of the Divine purpose therein. Into the last of these states Christ alone of all creatures is as yet

entered; and into this the Church alone hath the promise of being brought; and for the end of testifying her exclusive title to this sevenfold glory, the gifts of the Holy Ghost are restricted to the Church, while the redemption is extended to all. It is true that these gifts of the Holy Ghost were for the unfaithful as well as for the faithful of the Church; because God will show in all stages of the creature's progress, towards good as towards evil, the presence and operation of a will which is not brought into a necessity of well-doing or of evil-doing, but in every stage free to choose or to reject, to use or to abuse; of a will which looks for its recovery and establishment, not to any gift of God, but to God himself, to the absolute and invisible Godhead, to the abyssmal will of God for ever hidden in the Father. It is the Father's prerogative to incline the will unto Christ by giving it faith upon, and desire after Him: that inclination of the will which God, who worketh all in all, hath wrought in a believer, ever seeks to express itself in forms of reason and of action, and is thereby forced out upon Christ, who is the Father's will, expressed in perfect reason, and upon the Seven Spirits of Christ, which is the Father's perfect will, expressing itself in action. And thus it is that God, and Christ, and the Seven Spirits, are co-essential and co-operative in every believer towards the production of any true and perfect work of godliness. Wherefore it is written, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all," (1 Cor. xii. 4–6.) These working together according to their several offices in the members of Christ's body, it is little short of blasphemy to assert that the fruit will not be a good work perfect before God. To hold that the actions of the regenerate man introduced into the body of Christ, and, having in him the power of the Head, are not, and cannot be holy, is to say that God is baffled by His creatures—that God, having purposed and undertaken a work of regeneration in man, hath utterly failed. The truth of Scripture is, not "He that is born of God must ever sin;" but "He that is born of God cannot sin." What is born of the Spirit is spirit; and the spirit ever lusteth against the flesh, and its fruits are in all goodness and righteousness and truth. If indeed, as these poor erring brethren roundly assert, it would constitute Christ a sinner to take and to bear flesh with the law of flesh in it; then it must be that every action of the regenerate man must be sinful, having to prevail over the law of flesh in his members. But if, as the truth of all Scripture and theology is, that Christ took flesh with the law of flesh in it, and against that law prevailed to work out a perfect right-

eousness, and present his body acceptable unto God, then did he originate a new power in law, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, of which the very essence and character is to make man free from the law of sin and death; and to enable him to fulfil the righteousness of the law, by walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Now because a baptized man is baptized into this single truth that Christ has condemned sin in the flesh, and introduced into it the life and law of righteousness, he is a debtor to crucify the flesh, not in part, but altogether; and to serve the law of righteousness, not in part, but altogether. And therefore God can require of us nothing short of perfection, or be satisfied with nothing short of it; and so at our baptism we are required to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, like good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ. To require less, as hath been said, would be either to say it is impossible with God to bring holiness out of flesh, and therefore that Christ did never take flesh as we have it, but in some better state; or it were to say, that as Christ is, we are not in the world; as He overcame, we are not to overcome; that there is not oneness between the Head and the members; that He hath a power which we have not, and in the days of His flesh put forth a power which He doth not give us to put forth in the days of our flesh. And either of these positions is Antichrist. I have no hesitation in saying, that to deny that Christ came in flesh with law of flesh is Antichrist, and that the Church which will maintain it is apostate, and ought with all haste to be forsaken by the faithful, whom indeed she will not bear, but will persecute forth of her doomed city.

If then perfection, and nothing short of perfection, it becometh the holiness of God to require, and the condition of a member or minister of Christ to yield, why is it that there is in every good man such a readiness to confess sin, and account himself guilty in the sight of God? and why saith the apostle, "If any man saith he sinneth not, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him?" The answer is, first, that a man confesses not his own sin as a person merely, but the sins of flesh, and so in some sort the sins of all persons: and hence it is that in those Psalms, as the 40th and 69th, which refer to Christ, we find him at one and the same time asserting his own righteousness and confessing his numerous sins, which were a palpable and glaring contradiction, but for the truth that a man feels himself answerable for the sins of all flesh, and called upon to confess it as his own; for flesh is one thing: there is not my flesh and thy flesh, but flesh which one man made sinful in the mass, and another man redeemed in the mass from the power of sin by introducing through the soul the law of the Spirit of righteousness. And in this sense

the greater saint a man is, the greater confessor of sin, the more lowly penitent, the more deeply exercised before God in intercession for all men whatsoever. And so it is that Christ, being perfectly holy, is infinitely aggrieved with the sin of that flesh which He took, and taking which He thoroughly apprehended what a fearful pit of darkness, what a miry clay of iniquity it was. In this lay His suffering, His agony, His crucifixion, His warfare, His victory—His victory always, and always complete. Now, in so far forth as confession of, and contrition for, sin is of this common and brotherly kind among all of the communion of flesh, it argues no personal nor actual transgression in him who makes it, neither any victory of his flesh, but is compatible, yea, and always present with a body, soul, and spirit blameless before God. But it is most true that besides this agonising of the believer, under the iniquities which flesh is ever breeding and ever bringing forth from all its fountains, there are personal sins, real fleshly sins, fruits and works of the flesh over which he hath to mourn. Besides such agonies as the apostle uttereth over the vileness of flesh in the 8th chapter of the Romans at the very time he could say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death which is in my members;" there are, it is to be feared, in the most advanced Christians times and occasions wherein the flesh getteth the mastery over the Spirit, and peculiar transgressions are committed. Whence come these daily sins in thought, word, and deed, whereof we confess ourselves to be guilty? I answer, without a moment's hesitation, from want of faith in Christ as having crucified the flesh, and by the Eternal Spirit fulfilled righteousness with every member of His body which He presented holy upon the cross. If a man ever believed in Christ as the flesh-mortifier and the spirit-quickener, I make no doubt he would be ever holy in thought, word, and deed. To deny this would be to deny that Christ was at the call of our faith; or else that, being at faith's call, He was unable to succour the believer; or, being able, that He is not at all times willing: every one of which positions is a blasphemy. But then the question is put, Are you sure that a man may ever act faith? He both may and he ought. He may, because Christ as a man did so, and proved that manhood was capable of it when informed by the Divine personality of the Son; and he ought, because by his baptism he is brought into the body of Christ to have the information of that Divine personality. And being thus sustained by the Son of God, who yielded the soul's perfect service of an unceasing faith, he ought to yield the same; and if he yield it, to deny that holiness will follow, is to deny that God is ever accessible to the

poorest and most unworthy creature who puts his trust in Him, which Christ, a worm and no man, proved to be the greatest blasphemy against the inexhaustible goodness of God. For want of faith therefore in the Lord's Christ as a regenerate head of holiness through the Spirit, the regenerate man doth commit sin, and not from any necessity of sinning, or from any other cause in his condition or circumstances. All sin in the Church cometh of want of faith, as all righteousness cometh of the presence of it. And a believer is not a holy man in respect of sins past forgiven, but in respect of sins present overcome and put away.

So much then the more guilty are we for every sin, if so be that we ought ever to be perfect? Yea, verily; and to place guilt in its true light I have set forth these things. To exhibit it as an act, not of necessity or of circumstances, but of real deliberate pleasure in sinning; to show it forth in its true character as an act of the will, preferring evil to good, and the world unto God; not to please any one's vanity or self-righteousness, but to exhibit his sin as doubly sinful, I have put this point of perfection upon its true scriptural and theological foundation. Well, and do you leave us there? Surely not. When I have thus shown the believer that his every sin is of kind the same with Adam's first sin, being done against a standing of perfectness, though of far deeper die, as being done not against a God-Creator merely, but against a God-Creator sinned against yet forgiving, becoming a God-brother, and as such dying for men; when I have thus brought out the true free-will guilt of sin against a God revealed in Jesus Christ, I do not leave the sinner there to pine and perish, but address myself to the work of showing forth the virtues of that blood which cleanseth from all iniquity. Having exhibited the baptismal covenant for an immaculate life, and the virtue of Christ's body to nourish this new life up into the perfect image and form of Christ; I then preach the virtue of the other part of the Lord's Supper, the blood of the New Covenant presented to us and partaken of in the cup; where is exhibited the blood of Christ, as the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness; whereby every sin of every believer is freely pardoned. And I entreat all to come and receive that pledge of sins remitted, and of an inheritance bequeathed to the sinless. This is the act of faith on Christ as an intercessor continually presenting His body, as of a Lamb slain, in the heavens to the Father; and ever saying, "Behold this perfect sacrifice for the sins of men; and, in consideration of this, hear, O Father, and accept these prayers, now presented to thee by thy saints for forgiveness:" and in honour of His continual High-Priesthood, the Father accepts the offering, and ever

grants them forgiveness out of the greatness of His love and grace. There are these three things in the Church: First, A new generation of water and the Spirit in the sacrament of baptism; Secondly, A nourishment of the same regenerate life up to a perfect man in the womb, (so to speak;) that is, in the body of Christ; and, thirdly, The atonement of His blood for all transgressions we commit against the mercy of God; through which atonement we obtain the fellowship of that inheritance which Christ purchased with His blood. And how is the glory of that atonement enhanced, when it is seen as made, not only for all flesh, but likewise for the sins of all the Church of God, whose sins are so much deepened in their die, above the worst sins of the unbaptized world. This is the true Christian doctrine of the membership of Christ; which being received, will cause much sin to cease, greatly increase good works, and make us advance more and more near unto perfection; will give sin its true depth of guilt, as the act of a will against the most gracious God, and so place the preciousness of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ in its proper light. Would that God might be pleased to make many souls receive and rest upon it; for it is not the word of man, but His own most sure word of truth given for the sanctification of His people.

And when any member or office-bearer in the Church hath fallen away from his steadfastness in the faith, and departed from the way of holiness, and no longer yieldeth "works perfect before God," what counsel and instruction giveth Christ our Head for recovering him from the snare of Satan? It is in these words: "Strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die." The method of recovery is, to look well after what we still possess, according to that standing rule of the gospel, "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly:" and that other, "He that is unfaithful over the least will be unfaithful over the greatest:" and "if ye have not been faithful over the mammon of unrighteousness, who will intrust unto you the true riches?" God never resigneth His creature, however unfaithful he become; He still looketh upon him as His responsible creature, and expecteth him to make a good use of what is left in his hand. God giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. His prodigal children are ever welcome to return, in whatever misery they are found, and however they may have dishonoured their good Father's name. There is a practical illustration of God's not imputing sin, in this His way of dealing with the angel of the Church of Sardis, which is very comforting to a poor sinner labouring under the sense of neglected opportunities and misused talents. The great Judge,

whose eyes are like a flame of fire, doth not lay upon His servant any sore rebukes, or exact of him any severe penance, or place him at a distance upon his good behaviour, or require of him any period of probation; but, without reference to the past delinquency, calls upon him simply to make the best use of what is left; to "strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die." And this is true wisdom as well as mercy; for it availeth not to grieve a man's heart with upbraidings, or to cast his spirit down with heavy tasks, or to represent to him how much he hath squandered, or into what misery he hath brought himself, unless you do show him what to set his hand to in the instant, and by what means to regain his lost ground, and recover himself from his present misery. What, for example, would it avail in me possessed with the views of a Christian Church, which I have learned from these epistles, to go to some landward parish of my own dear Scotland, where all is dead as a stone through the freezing power of two or three generations of legal preachers; or to some city parish where all is sour as vinegar, bitter as gall and wormwood, and proud, scornful, and self-sufficient as Satan himself, through the preaching of some systematic, critical, hair-splitting high Calvinist; and bestow upon them violent philippics upon their present wretchedness, or set before them strong and vivid representations of a perfect Christian Church, full of life and love and power and joy? Such a method were sure to drive them mad with rage, or to intoxicate them with vanity, or to split them asunder, and rend them to pieces as when a ship is taken all aback with a mighty wind. I once knew an instance of a Christian Church, which had long languished in a lifeless state, at length blessed with the ministry of a man who set his face like a flint, and without fear delivered the truth in its fulness, and loved to declare the mysteries of the kingdom; and I have lived to see their latter end worse than the beginning. The old bottles would not, or could not, contain the new wine. Again, I knew another man who came unto a flock which was literally no flock, being but a handful of persons gathered through attachment to his person, who was as ignorant of the truth of God as evangelical ministers generally are, and was as zealous in the use of eloquence and argument and affection, and such like weapons of straw as other famous preachers are; but God was pleased to untie his evangelical bonds, and to enlarge his knowledge, and to open to him the riches of Christ; which ever as he learned he kept opening to his people, strengthening the while the orders and ordinances of the Church, and all things which were left of sound doctrine and wholesome discipline; and the result hath been that they have grown with him, and have advanced thus far together in love and fellow-

ship: and may God prosper them to the end!—Oh yes, I know from observation as well as reflection, that the true way to do either a person, or a minister, or a Church good, is to require him to strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die. If I, as an accomplished agriculturist from the Lothians of Scotland, should in my travels over the world fall in with some half-civilized people, scraping the surface of the earth with sharpened stakes, casting in their seeds, and so leaving them to thrive or perish as Providence might order it; what were my wisest course? To call them together, and read them lectures on the Scottish system of husbandry, and the wonderful inventions of art by which we wait upon nature's productiveness? How idle and vain were such discourses, however exact and eloquent! The part of a wise man would be to take them where he found them, and, calculating upon the laws of human nature, which seeks the best that can be attained, to improve this implement and to correct that method of management; to improve the seed by sowing every choicest particle, here to drain the moist, and there to irrigate the dry places; to improve the breed of cattle, and the structure of the houses; and so from one thing to another to advance onward with a sure and steady pace towards perfection. Even so Christ would have the spiritual husbandry of any decayed Church to pursue the path towards recovery. But to come to particulars on a question of such unspeakable interest to the Protestant Churches, which I have shown stand represented in the Church of Sardis; I would endeavour to do my part, through great weakness and many possible errors, to show how those wrecks of churches, which are in these realms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, may best find their way back to that primitive state of endowment in which, in my former lecture, I showed that the Church of Christ was set up. As one given in trust with the vineyard, I would show how this vine, which is all dismantled of its glory, and trodden down to the earth, may rear itself again and hang in clustering bunches of richest fruit. God help me with wisdom.

The words, "strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die," I look upon as the very oracle of Christ to the churches in this island; which, if observed by minister and people, will not only be our salvation from impending ruin, but likewise our restoration to ancient primitive faith and fulness of gifts. For that there is a remnant of life and piety and communion with the Head, and with one another, left among us, no one can doubt. Let me then go about the work of explaining this oracular response for our present time of extremity. And to begin with those of my own order, in whose mouth is reposed the ministry of the word: Theirs it is, to receive

the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge promised by the Spirit, which may fit them to be pastors and teachers of the flock. And this they will do, by strengthening that dependence upon the Holy Ghost, which hardly any one is without in a lesser or greater degree, by increasing prayer and meditation and secret exercises of every kind, and pressing upon their churches to co-operate with them for the same gracious end. Also by denying themselves to the arts of human eloquence, to the powers of natural reason, to the words of man's wisdom, and all the attractive beauties of discourse; for while these precede, or go hand in hand with, the spiritual suggestions, the latter will make no progress. Let the Spirit have His will and His way with your mind, and with your tongue, and be well assured that He will bring forth the word in strength and power and demonstration; and, if need be, in beauty and splendour and sublimity,—in one word, in perfectness. I have proved my lesson, and know that it is true. No one more studied, and, according to the general opinion, few had profited more in the gifts of natural reason as set forth in discourse from the pulpit, and certainly never was man more intent after the knowledge of the truth, or more zealous to communicate his convictions unto others. But when God showed me the more excellent way of casting my reason into the forms of His own word, instead of casting His word into the forms of my own understanding, and taught me that His truth was not wrapped up in some score of texts, well culled from the Gospels and the Epistles, but developed in divers manners throughout the Scriptures, and fructified in the believing soul by the Holy Ghost; I communed not with flesh and blood, but laid aside all former ideas of my profession, and submitted myself to the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Since which time I have somewhat profited in the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, and doubt not, by God's grace, to profit much more to the saving of my own soul, and of those who hear me. It is not from any desire to speak of myself, but to tell my brethren how God delivered me from the bonds and trammels of argument and oration, that I further put upon record the particulars of the method which He took; to the end they may be enlarged into the same liberty. After seven years' silence in my native land, —a voluntary penance which I put upon myself, that I might not be ever vexing, by the liberty of my discourse, their more cautious, close, and dogmatical taste,—I went down to open my mouth once more unto my brethren; and having read one or two compositions in the pulpits of the metropolis, it was so ordered that I should spend a fortnight among the manly and unsophisticated people of the south of Scotland, the land of my fathers. Strongly did the Spirit testify

within me, Why wouldst thou go and read to them these fragments of truth, which thou hast written with so much care? They have not heard thy voice these many years, and may never hear it again: so open thy heart and not thy papers to them, and trust thou Me. Oh, what a conflict there was then between nature and the Holy Ghost! Nature said, Thy fame is great, thy labour hath been vast in composing these sermons; thou art all unskilled in extempore discourse: the land is full of jealousy towards thee; thou hast their suffrages all to gain: the Scotch are a stubborn and untoward people, and their ancient simplicity with respect to preaching is much corrupted by modern masters in the art, who have brought strength of faculty and power of natural reason to bear upon the great questions of the orthodox faith. But the Spirit wrought with me, and said, Wilt thou then treat thy father and thy mother, and all thy kindred, and all these hearty people, with poor and puny fragments of thy mind because there are cold critics and cruel enemies abroad? and wilt thou be unfaithful to thy Master, who hath taught thee so much concerning His coming and His kingdom, and the judgments which are ready to be poured out on the earth? Thus it went with me, and I was sore divided. I took counsel with two, the nearest and the dearest to me upon the earth, who inclined to think it was a hazardous experiment, and advised that I should take along with me my store of papers, the accumulation of seven years' laborious study. And so I did: but, praised be the Lord, they were suffered to remain undisturbed. For so much sustenance did I receive, such fulness and freshness of matter, such power and heartiness of utterance, that from that day to this I have felt the most assured confidence in the Holy Ghost; and, during months of daily laborious preaching, have often fainted indeed in body, and my very bones cried out with pain, but never have I once fainted in spirit. Thus did the Holy Ghost deliver me from that dangerous pinnacle, in which the approbation and applause of distinguished men had exalted me, and set my feet in a large room and a safe place, establishing my goings. And thus will He speak in the hearts of all ministers, as it were, forcing them from their false positions, if they will but give heed to His voice. The trial was no small one to my flock also; and some of them still regret the absence of that natural beauty and grace with which they were won from the world into the heavenly fold; but God strengthens me by degrees to wean them of these childish things; and I have a full confidence that, as it is needful, He will supply all their wants out of His own spiritual fulness. Still, however, I have not ceased to labour in my study, by night and by day, with diligence, strengthening myself in the knowledge of

His Word, and, what is much more important, in the knowledge of Himself; waxing bolder and bolder, according to the distinctness and certainty with which the Holy Ghost speaks within my heart. In the same way will others find enlargement from that terrible bondage to written words, which has ever been the millstone around the Church of England, which was introduced into Scotland by the frivolous school of Blair, and hath now gotten the victory over almost all our preachers. It is not by a desperate effort that a man will disentangle himself from the yoke, but by strengthening that trust in the Holy Ghost which remains alive within his heart. Sampson's seven locks had to grow again before the Nazarite's might returned. Nature cannot cast nature out; it can only overturn and overturn the fabric; it cannot lift it from the ground. It may be that the Lord will give some of the masters in the Church emancipation: I know He can: but they must know the evil of their state before they will seek deliverance from it; and that, I fear, they have not seen as yet. I now perceive it to be a very great mistake to go to the pulpit with words composed in the closet, and reading them off, to think that we fulfil the part of a minister of the word. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." And who shall so speak, but he who is speaking from the same Spirit who inspired these oracles? For the end of distribution, Christ hath the Seven Spirits: He did not cease to have these Spirits when the canon of Scripture was closed; and, having them for ever, He will distribute them for ever through the members of His body. The unbelief of other ages was not so great infidelity, as that which in this day is called belief. The Church at present is, I think, a greater infidel than the infidels of former times. Mohammed believed a great deal more of the Scriptures than many of our most approved Churchmen. Never till now was it creditable to believe the least possible. O God, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us!

I insist the more upon the gifts proper to the ministers of the Word, because until this high-priesthood of reason, this continual ministry of incense to the natural faculties of men, be superseded, by the high-priesthood of the Spirit, and the ministry of supernatural truth to the faith of the Church, there never will be any general manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Ghost among the people. The gift must reappear in word, before it reappear in work. There must be a testimony before there will be a fulfilment. Preaching, as it is at present practised, is no ministry of the Holy Ghost, but of man's good sense, cultivated by education and learning; and it begets in the people the dislike of supernatural agency, the distrust

of Christ as the possessor and distributor of the Seven Spirits of God. When I hear of valiant preaching of Christ as the rightful possessor of the Seven Spirits, and of the Church as "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," I will hail the dawn of the Church's rising glory, and of the Spirit's returning strength. And it is because I hear of this in divers parts of my dear Scotland, that I have such steady hope in the midst of these tempestuous clouds which are ready to burst upon her. And my exhortation to all the holy brethren who are looking for the consolation of the Church, is, that they would weary God, and give Him no rest, till He raise up stout-hearted ministers, who will come forth in the fulness of the Spirit, and set their face like a flint against the infidelity both of preachers and of people. The little brotherhoods whom He is gathering out of all the churches in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and I doubt not in other parts also, these beginnings of the Philadelphian Church, ought, I think, steadily to direct their prayers to this one object, that it would please God either to instruct their present ministers in the mysteries of the person, and office, and kingdom of Christ, or that He would raise up others in their stead, who might make an end of this high-priesthood of the natural faculties, and give forth the oracles of the Spirit from faith to faith; being endowed with the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, from Him who hath the Seven Spirits of God.

Meanwhile, for the revival of the other gifts amongst those who know that they are the Church's dowry, I would press the general rule, "Strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die." Let him who is moved with tender pity and compassion of the sick, and hath delight in visiting their beds of languishing, and ministering comfort to their souls, strengthen this movement of the Spirit, and observe towards which object of His merciful visitations the Spirit calleth forth His prayers the most strenuously and the most frequently: let him feel his way, and hear the voice within him, and observe the leadings of Providence; and he will be guided, yea forced, to those objects in whom God hath a purpose to manifest forth His glory in the way of healing. In a case which hath occurred within these few days under my own knowledge and observation, as clear and distinct as was the healing of Jairus's daughter, the Spirit did in this way lead on, and, as it were, gently enforce His servant to say the word, "Arise and walk." His heart had been strongly drawn to the handmaid of the Lord for nearly two months, though far distant from her place of abode, and not much acquainted with her or her family. On the day when the

glory of God was to be manifested in the house, though drawn thither by the faith and desire of the work about to be done, he was twice on the eve of departing, and was twice gently entreated by the father of the maiden to abide a little longer, for the delight he had in his company and discourse: and as Abraham and Lot, for their hospitality, got signal manifestations of God's favour, so did this pious father, though nowise a believer in, but rather opposer of, supernatural power, that night receive his daughter whole and sound, after eight years of sorrowful disease, and disablement in her members. The Lord permits not His servants to act presumptuously in such matters: or rather, our faith is weak; and as He did to Peter, He hath to take us by the hand, that it sink not altogether. I should say, therefore, both from the general precept, and from the only instance of healing that has come under my observation, that the true way of obtaining the revival of this gift is to strengthen that ordinance of the visitation of the sick, which still remaineth in all the churches, and was instituted for the end of healing, and not for any mere consolation of the afflicted person.

Two other instances of as remarkable a kind have occurred under my own personal teaching of the sick. These had "the gift of faith by the same Spirit:" and when they heard from my lips, that there was ground for believing, not only that Christ in them could glorify God by enabling them in their agonies to say, Thy will, not mine, be done; but also, that God would glorify Christ in them, by healing all their diseases; they did, one of them straightway, and the other, after two or three conversations, believe, and were instantly healed of their diseases, to the wonder and astonishment of all around. Now, both these persons were examples of lively faith, in that which they did believe; insomuch that the one was most joyful in the prospect of instant death, and the other in the prospect of a life of disease and infirmity. God be praised, they are now healthy and happy in their families. This also confirms the rule, "Strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die." These had strengthened their faith, and were ready to receive the word when it was spoken to them. They were full of assurance of spiritual benefits; and when temporal benefits were proposed to them upon the same authority, they believed with the same assurance, and were healed. Until the present most false and miserable doctrine, that a doubting Christian is a good Christian, be swallowed up in the belief of God's faithfulness, and assurance be preached as of the very essence of faith, there will be no general manifestations of "the gift of faith," which the apostle placeth next to "the word of wisdom and

the word of knowledge." And until prayers for the sick in the churches be more than a formality, and visitation of the sick more than an ordinary visit of comfort, instruction, or exhortation, there will be no general revival of "the gifts of healing," which come next in order. And for "the working of miracles," it is to be eschewed by holding fast and strengthening the doctrine, that every work of the Spirit whatsoever is supernatural or miraculous. If men will break to pieces the base fabric of error, that conversion and edification come about by natural means and occasions, and that the Church is only a better sort of civilisation, a purer sort of society, and will uphold with might and main, that every act of the Spirit is supernatural; and that the ordinances, though they have an appropriateness to the spiritual grace, have no power or efficacy to produce the same; if we will strengthen the good doctrine which is ready to die, that the new birth is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and make the people familiar with the supernatural in all the operations of Divine grace, and beat down the affirmation, as false in fact as it is contemptible and pernicious in doctrine, that miracles were only provided in the Church till the canon of Scripture was completed, it will not be long before we shall see the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, as well as the poor evangelised.

Of "prophecy," which is the next gift and endowment of the Church, to be occupied as a talent until Christ shall come again and call us to account, the way to revive the energy and the manifestation is, for those who have felt their souls most strongly drawn out to the consideration of things to come, and to the prophetical word, to continue to walk in this department of the manifold wisdom of God, and to give heed to the Spirit speaking within them concerning coming events; for it is as much the Spirit's province "to show us things to come" as any other part of truth; and they who deny to the Spirit this office in the Church do verily blaspheme against Him, and contradict the promise of their gracious Lord. And to whatever arguments they may maintain their erroneous doctrine, that the spirit of prophecy is ceased in the Church, the answer is, "Ye make void the Scriptures by your traditions; for Jesus said, "The Comforter shall lead you into all truth, and shall show you things to come;" and ye say, The future cannot be known by any man; since the canon of Scripture was completed, the Spirit giveth no man to know the future; and even to interpret prophecy, which hath respect to the future, is beside the office of a wise steward, and unworthy the attention of a good Christian, and must be left to wild and fanciful speculators, restless spirits, who care not to intend the present weal

of the Church, but will be hunting after novelties and brooding over uncertainties." Therefore ye make void the word of Christ by your traditions, O ye evil-speaking men! thoughtless, it may be, but not the less evil-speaking men. He that will most honestly and earnestly contend against this abominable lie, which in all forms they are serving up as an opiate to stupify the Church, he that will occupy himself with the prophetic Scriptures, and maintain their high dignity, and show forth their excellent uses, he it is who is most likely to be the vessel for containing the precious gift of prophecy. I do not mean that learning in the prophecies, or in the systems of interpretation, or in the canons of interpretation, availeth much to the obtaining of this gift; but the drawing of the soul to look forward, the interest of the soul in things which are about to be, the intercession of the soul for the averting of calamities and for the procuring of blessings. Ah me! what notable instances of this wonderful gift, are there not recorded in the histories of those excellent men, who were submerged beneath a sea of calumny, and living in secret places from the fear of man's violence; of men who had a faith in Providence, and understood the mystery of the wheels of Providence; of men who had a faith in God's truth, and, being cast out of the Church for their faithful witness of it, were left to feed on hope, and promise, and prophecy; —our Covenanters, for example, whose story, written by the worthy Thomas Howie, hath so many instances of this kind, that a late zealous, but unbelieving, editor hath found it good to weed it of these unbecoming testimonies to a supernatural gift still subsisting in the Church. To men who are resting upon worldly prudence, and taking every kind of expedient for the security of the future, there will be no manifestation of this gift; but to those who are resting on God day by day, and wrestling with him earnestly for the Church and for her particular members, it will be given, I believe, and that speedily, to do the part of Agabus, who foretold the dearth and prophesied upon Paul; the part of him also who prophesied upon Timothy; the part of them, in former times, to whom God revealed everything before He would do it in the city. Therefore, if the Church would attain to this gift, let her strengthen the faith in God as a forewarning God, who giveth to His servants notice of the things which are about to come to pass; let them meditate, and teach, and give heed to those who meditate and teach the prophetic parts of Scripture.

With respect to the "discernment of spirits," which is the next endowment of the Church; as it is written by the apostles that these spirits were to be proved by certain tests of doctrine,—of which the chief were, that Christ was come in flesh, and that He is to be obeyed as Lord of all; we are inclined to believe that by degrees, as the

Church doth emancipate herself from questions of words and human forms of doctrine, and establish herself in the doctrine of the holy unction which she hath received, it will come to pass that the faculty of discerning spirits will revive in her, and believers will at once distinguish the spirits of Antichrist from the Spirit of Christ, false prophets from true, by the language which they hold upon these cardinal points of the Christian verity. The way, then, by which to recover this dormant gift is for the Church to have done with scholastic and systematic theology, which are men's tests, and to become wise and learned in those heavenly doctrines concerning the person and office and coming of Jesus Christ, who is the fulness and office of Godhead in a body. The question should be, not, Is he Calvinist, or Arminian; is he Episcopalian, or Presbyterian? is he Papist, or Protestant? but, Is he of Christ, or of Antichrist; is he of the wheat, or of the chaff? The day of decision is at hand, when none but the plants which our heavenly Father hath planted, shall be left standing by the axe of the feller who is coming up amongst them; and besides, there is neither truth nor charity in applying to each other the flattering unction of a human name, which hath no weight or currency in heaven. What though your friend be a good Presbyterian, or a good Episcopalian, will that save him? There is "no name given under heaven by which men must be saved but the name of Christ." This gift of the discernment of spirits will, I likewise believe, make progress along with the revival of love; for sure I am that it was exercised out of a godly jealousy and watchfulness over one another, to pluck out the roots of bitterness which still remained amongst the brethren, to the endangering of their own souls, and likewise of the whole Church. I am well assured, that if we loved one another with pure hearts fervently, God would grant to us as clear a discernment of each other's faults and evil possessions, and would raise up amongst us, persons who could search and probe the spirit for the knowledge of its ailments as skilfully as the physician doth examine the body, and ascertain the beginnings and hidden seats of its diseases. Moreover, I believe that the strengthening of discipline, which in the Church is what regimen and medicine are in the world, would be a great means of regaining the neglected gift of discerning spirits. Discipline, I mean, exercised not only by the rulers of the Church, whose office hath to do only with notable cases, but by the members of the Church, in all faithful loving-kindness one to another. I am sure that the Spirit is continually urging one to point out this and that evil in one's friends, whom our treacherous tongues, consulting, not for mutual good but mutual flattery, refuseth to obey. Now until men will be faithful in these small things,

they shall never be intrusted with the greater things; for "unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; and from him that hath not shall be taken even that he hath." Let us therefore strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die.

With respect to the "other tongues," whether as spoken or interpreted, which is the last of the gifts in the enumeration of St Paul to the Corinthians, we have to observe that it is a sign which was given to the Church, to countervail in the sight of the heathen the contemptibleness of preaching, which is not with the words of man's wisdom, nor with the arts of human eloquence, but with the demonstration of the Spirit in the gift of tongues and other gifts. Preaching is God's way of foolishness to ashame man's way of wisdom by the mightier effects which it produces upon the hearer: but that men might not despise the childish simplicity of this ordinance, its "line upon line, its precept upon precept," there was added the power of the Holy Ghost, for which the first preachers were required to wait in Jerusalem till they were endowed with that power from on high; and Paul, in a certain place, speaking of teachers, who with vain words of man's wisdom perverted the Church, saith, "I will know, not the word only of such an one, but also the power." From this consideration we are inclined to believe, that the gift of tongues will arise, in those parts of the Church where the truth is most called in question, and is like to be overpowered by the weight of human opinion and man's preaching. Then, and there, will God make His own voice to be heard, and His own presence to be recognised in the despised and rejected defenders of "the faith once delivered to the saints." Moreover, when He is minded to send forth anew apostolical and evangelical men, to give that warning unto Babylon, and to all the nations of the world, which is prophesied of in this book, saying, "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come," I feel a strong conviction that the work will begin, as it began of old, with the gift of tongues; and it appeareth to give no small sign of an approaching work of this kind, that the gift of tongues is reported to have reappeared amongst us. Furthermore, I have come to understand from a deeper meditation of Joel's prophecy, that this gift of tongues which Peter asserteth to be the fulfilment thereof, was intended as a seal against the fearful day of the Lord, from which there is to be deliverance in Mount Zion, and in the remnant whom the Lord our God shall call; and therefore I would say, Strengthen the missionary spirit that existeth in the Church; deliver it out of the hand of self-constituted committees, and let it be resident in the members of the Church, whom God shall thereto call by His gifts; strengthen the anticipation of im-

pending judgments which is now in the Church, and with it the desire of warning the world, and God will add the gift of tongues, that the desire of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of His people may not be defeated. Beat down the error, the hideous error, that God doth not love all men, and willeth not that all men should repent; and maintain the truth, that the world and all mankind have the barrier of sin removed from between them and God, that they may draw near to Him in faith of the atonement which Christ hath made: act upon this truth in your families, in your flocks, in your neighbourhoods: tell His love of all men unto all men, and rest assured that the Lord will enable you to tell it beyond the bounds and limits of the English language, in every language of the earth.

Finally, "Strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die;" make no bounds, nor leaps, nor desperate reaches, after a something which the Spirit hath given no notice of in your own soul. Let the Holy Ghost, and not man's ambition, move your prayer for gifts; let the Holy Ghost, and not man's affection, move your desire to exercise your gifts. Thus, by abiding in your places, and minding your callings, and filling our offices in the Church, and strengthening our graces, and well occupying what gifts we have, shall we be increasing more and more in knowledge, and in love, and in power, and in humbleness of mind, until we come to be the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. There can be no doubt that God is greatly blessing His Church in many ways, both by word and by deed, that He is reviving the power of preaching, that He is awakening the spirit of love and unity in the hearts of His people, and that He is confirming their faith by signs and wonders.—I see a glorious dawn; and though it be sadly clouded and overcast, I feel assured that it is no northern light sent to cheer the night, but the full blush of morn which fills the eastern heavens. Ours it is to propitiate its coming with songs of the morning, and to hail the rising Sun of Righteousness. Ours it is to welcome the unequivocal tokens of the coming Lord, to invoke the holy Light to come speedily and disperse these envious clouds of darkness. And as, on the day of the jubilee morn, men were stationed on the eastern mountains of Jerusalem to catch the first streak of dawn, and give intimation thereof to the priests who stood in the temple, ready harnessed to sound its welcome through the silver trumpets, whence, caught by the watchmen stationed on every neighbouring hill, the glad tidings were sounded from mountain top to mountain top, and reverberated through all the valleys of Israel, and welcomed everywhere with music and with dancing; so ought we, who watch around the walls of our spiritual Zion, and are scattered over her borders, to lift up

our voice like a trumpet and welcome right joyfully the signs of the coming redemption and glory; nor be discouraged by those present possessors of the inheritance, who, not being the rightful owners, are full loth to hear that their tenure is fast coming to an end.

After this instruction to the angel of the Church of Sardis, comes another of the same kind, and not less appropriate to the condition of the Church in this land, and to all the Reformed churches; "Remember therefore, how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast till I come." These words carry an appeal to the trust which had been committed to him, both as to gift and as to preaching; for the receiving, I think, refers to the gift of the Holy Ghost; being the same word as is used by Peter on the day of Pentecost, "Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost," and by our Lord, (Acts i. 8,) "Ye shall receive power," and in the narrative of the Samaritan Church, (Acts xiii. 15, 17, 19,) and everywhere, I may say, throughout the Scriptures. But as to the hearing, I think it refers to the preaching of the gospel. How can they hear without a preacher? And both together are included in that word of the apostle, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" There being these two ways of communication by gift, and by preaching, which in the old time went together, and were intended always to go together, the chief Shepherd chargeth His unfaithful servant over the flock of Sardis, to remember how abundantly He had received and heard: and the like charge giveth He to every pastor of every flock; nor will He be turned aside in the day of account by any pretence that we received no such gift, and heard no such preaching. The gift and the preaching were unto His Church; to every member according to its office in the body, to every servant according to his ability. Of all the true servants no one was passed over; each had a gift to trade upon, until his Master should come again: to all the baptized Peter promised the gift of the Holy Ghost, and all the brethren in the Church of Samaria received it. Christ doth not contemplate His Church as subsisting in many generations, and having a different responsibility, according to their distance from the time of His incarnation. He contemplates His Church as one body, independent on time and place, of which all the members are equally near and equally dear to Him. He presents Himself as the Head of that body possessing the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; and He saith, Were you at a loss for power in the Holy Ghost? why believed you not on me? why made you not your suit unto me? Were you in want of a star, an angel, to enlighten you? why made you not your request unto me? What I possess you possess: all mine are yours: is it not written, "All things are yours, whether

Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or things present, or things to come, or life, or death; for ye are mine, and I am God's?" This is the law of the Church, and be assured this is the language which Christ will hold to every member of His Church; and the sooner men take this to heart the better for them. Let no one grudge or grieve, but rather rejoice that in Christ Jesus he hath such a privilege. Would the poor weavers in Spitalfields rejoice or grieve, did I tell them that there is wealth of money provided for every one of them, and standing at their names in the book of the Bank of England? And should the poorer Church grieve because I tell her, that in Christ Jesus there is provided for her riches and wealth to supply all her wants? Let them deny, if they can, that Christ hath the seven spirits of God: let them deny, if they can, that the Church is His fulness: but if these two verities they dare not to deny, let them rejoice in their strength, and go about their work manfully and cheerfully. I say, therefore, to every minister, and to every member of Christ, "Remember what thou hast received and heard:" thou hast received Christ, and with Him God will freely give thee all things: thou hast heard the gospel, which is glad tidings of great joy to thee and to all mankind, or if, O reader, thou knewest not before that thou hadst these words and these gifts treasured up for thee in Christ, thou knowest it now; and see that thou believe it; and believing it, that thou act upon it, and tell it to thy neighbours and thy friends, that they may be partakers with thee of the fulness of Christ. Remember what thou receivedst and heardst.

The gift of the Holy Ghost came with, and not without, the preaching of the gospel. As they heard Peter preach the gospel unto them, Cornelius and his company received the Holy Ghost; and the Galatians received the Holy Ghost by the hearing of faith. And I believe that the reason for which these gifts were not received at the Reformation was the defective preaching of Christ, whom indeed they well understood, and declared as the only sacrifice and atonement for sin, but very imperfectly as the High-Priest and Head of His Church. For had they understood His glory as they understood His incarnation, the heavenly things as they understood the earthly, I make no doubt they would have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which hold of the former; as well as the fruits of righteousness, which hold of the latter. The Reformers had too strong an enemy in their face to think of anything else but their deliverance out of his hand; and they rested too much upon the secular arm for the promotion of religion. They contemplated the Church more in its national than in its celestial aspect: they appealed too much to history and learning and human authority;

all which was indeed greatly for the benefit of the kingdom, but much to the detriment of the Church. Their minds were possessed with the questions of the day; and being full of these, the Scripture was considered more in its bearings upon them, than in its own integrity and fulness. Take up the writings of any of the Reformers, even such as Jewel or Hooker, and you find learning, wisdom, and sound divinity; but withal it hath respect to the earthly, rather than the heavenly, relations of the Church. Their knowledge is limited, their ideas few, and their discourse scanty, concerning the glory of Christ, and the glory which is to be brought to us at His appearing. To clear the questions of the king's authority and the authority of the Church, of the law and the gospel, of the sacraments and the orders of the Church, of ceremonies and customs, was the main argument of their discourse. In their symbols of faith they were Protestant more than Christian, scholastic more than apostolic, systematical more than evangelical. How little have you there concerning the personal offices and operations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! how much concerning election, justification, and the sacraments; how little concerning the present office and dignity of Christ, the future glory and the kingdom! These things were not opened unto them: there was little or no discourse concerning the promise of the Spirit into which Christ entered when He ascended up on high. Of the Spirit of Christ in the believer, they much discoursed: of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of the Father, exceeding little; wherein though I lament over their shortcoming, on their own account, I blame them not, neither would be thought to detract from their excellent work. But I would speak the truth for the truth's sake; and also to explain how it was that they received not the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The subject of the first resurrection, of the coming of Christ, of the judgment of the nations, and of the new Jerusalem, and the new heavens and the new earth, of the restoration of the Jews and the condition of the world, was to them still covered with that darkness and indistinctness which the apostasy had brought over every other doctrine of the Christian faith. Upon these points they retained very much the form of doctrine which they found. Now, till these subjects are opened to the Church, till the Church is put into the condition of a witness for Christ's glory, which, personally, He now possesseth, and hereafter will bring to His members, she will not be endowed with the heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come, which are the seal of that testimony. Till then, she knows not what use to make of them; they are not for show, neither are they for comfort, but they are for proof; and before you bring your proof, you

must first enunciate your proposition. Within these few years the Church hath been enunciating the truth, concerning the glory and coming of Christ. This is now the word of the preacher; and to this, which the multitude, with the rulers and chief priests, are denying, God is giving His testimony, by causing signs and wonders to be done, in the name of His holy child Jesus. This now is the true reason why the gifts in time past have disappeared from the Church. Would any one expect holiness without preaching Christ's holy life in our flesh? would he expect holiness by preaching the Anabaptist doctrine of Christ's having other flesh, or no flesh at all; or by preaching the merit of our own works, or by preaching free will; or by preaching the merits of saints, or any such "doctrines of devils"? No more may any one expect the gift of the Holy Ghost without preaching Christ glorified, Christ endowed with the Seven Spirits of God, for the service of His Church; and, thus endowed, present in the members; and coming to glorify them with Himself; and to use them in judging and governing the earth. These truths have ceased from being preached openly in the Church, since the first four centuries; and, accordingly, since the same period have the gifts ceased in the Church.

There were many causes which conspired together to obscure and hide those truths, of the heavenly things, of the glory of Christ and His Church, of Christ speaking from heaven in His members, upon which the gifts of the Spirit attend as the witness. Whereof the chief were, first, the adoption by the preachers in the Church, of those methods of discourse which the ancient philosophers and orators of Greece and Rome brought to such perfection: very early was the foolishness of preaching cast aside, for the eloquence and learning of the ancient schools. Now, as we have seen, the power and demonstration of the Spirit were given to countervail the human weakness, artlessness, and childishness, which appeared in the method of the preachers. This evil by no means ceased at the Reformation; but was rather revived, and brought to great maturity in the theological and systematic discourses which followed thereupon. The second reason was, the departure of the Church from the witness of the Holy Ghost to the witness of councils, whose collective deliberations and judgments came, to supplant the apostolical evidences, of signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. At the Reformation, this was strengthened, instead of being weakened, in the Protestant churches; which, by their Articles and Confessions, defined the form of their doctrine, with even a more authoritative hand, than had been done before or was ever done after, save in the Council of Trent: and we, their successors, instead of giving liberty

to the Spirit to testify upon any point more fully, seem to grow more and more resolved against permitting any such liberty of the Holy Ghost. The third reason, as it seemeth to me, for the cessation of discourse concerning Christ's glory, and the consequent cessation of the seal thereof in these gifts, was the transfer which, towards the end of the third century, was made of the Church's trust and confidence, from Christ her Head unto the "powers that be," His representatives on the earth; to whom, indeed, it was the duty of the Church to yield all subjection in the Lord, as it was their duty to furnish her all protection and patronage in the Lord; but in things spiritual, in things internal to herself, she must own no head but the Lord Jesus Christ. From the time of Constantine, the Church began to make flesh her arm, to court secular honours and worldly well-being, until, by degrees, the Lord raised up in the false prophet, that is, the pope of Rome, a scourge both to her who gave, and to them who received the honour that pertaineth only to Christ. Now, though the Reformed churches did faithfully and right manfully extricate themselves from the dominion of this the little horn, which domineered over the ten-horned beast, they still leaned much more to the civil power than they ought to have done. I mean not to deny, that in the Scottish Church, we did put that question upon its proper basis; but to assert that the question altogether looked too large and prominent in the eye of the Reformers, to the eclipsing of the true question of the Headship of Christ. The Scottish Reformers would have brought out of the civil magistrate a well-spring of nourishment unto the Church; and, had they understood the subject of Christ's headship, and His way of asserting it, by the gifts of the Spirit, they would have been preserved from such a delusive hope. Not perceiving that Christ had intended, in all time until His coming again, to preserve in His Church, by signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, the presence of His own supernatural protection; and taking upon them, from the false miracles of the Papacy, to doubt, and even some of them to deny, that miracles were any longer to be looked for in the Church; it came to pass that they sought so to limit and define and regulate the office of a king, as that he should yield to the Church that patronage, safeguard, and promotion which Christ alone is able to afford. And, labouring in this way, the Scottish Reformers, and not a few of those upon the continent also, lost the true doctrine of the king's authority, and adopted the false doctrine, that if a king rule tyrannically, he may be resisted, and even deposed, by a Christian people; which is at once to disobey the commandments of the Lord and His apostles, and to refuse the example which they and the Primitive Church for three centuries set

before us. To refuse, indeed, the command of an earthly sovereign, when it contradicts the will of God, is the act of a true subject of the Lord Jesus Christ; but to resist him, is to resist God and Christ, whose minister he is. While the Scottish Reformers, in their ignorance of the nature, extent, and continual manifestation of Christ's headship, did thus, by seeking to bring more out of an earthly king than his office can yield, overturn the principle of subjection altogether, making it to depend upon the judgment of private persons, whether they should obey or resist; the English Reformers being well guarded on this hand by the vigilance of a queen, jealous of her prerogative to the very uttermost, yet failed in preventing her from meddling with the sacred offices of the Church itself, even to the interdicting of preaching altogether. Desirous as I am at all times, and in all ways to justify that great work of God, both in England and in Scotland, I cannot help lamenting that the Church of England should ever have permitted the name, *Head of the Church*, to be given to any creature upon earth. In this matter the Scottish Church was more wisely guided of the Spirit. When the kings of Great Britain would have practised with her as they had done with the Church of England, she at once came forth with a noble testimony of martyrs against the usurpation; and, during that season of persecution which occurred in the reigns of the last two of the Stuart family, when the Church of Scotland was cast out for her testimony to Christ as the only Head, there were wrought, for the sake of that noble army of witnesses, things wonderful; as truly miraculous and supernatural, I believe, as ever occurred in any age;—insomuch that when Wodrow, the father of the Church historian, and himself long a persecuted man, was upon his death-bed, it lay heavy on his conscience that he had not recorded the wonderful dealings of God with His persecuted servants in those days; and he took his son, the Church historian, pledged by solemn vow to a dying father, that he would do his best, to gather up the traditions and monuments of these miraculous interpositions, which were still to be found surviving amongst the people. And how faithfully he did this, is partly known by his Church History, and is partly not known through the, I must call it, neglect of the university of Glasgow to make public those many volumes of his narratives which lie hidden in their public library. Methinks, to have given forth to the Church these monuments of God's dealings with our persecuted fathers, would have been a still more excellent work, than building a stone monument on the summit of every hill. But since the period of these wrestlings for the headship of Christ, which concluded at the Revolution, there hath been in this country, in Scotland as well as England, a

deathlike silence concerning the headship of Christ, and a contentedness with the secularities of government, which has done more, at least in our own Church, to destroy the spirit of religion, than all the persecutions she hath endured since the Reformation. Now, however, that, with all her strength, with all her popularity among men of all parties, she is turning, or about to turn, her hand against the testimony of God's love to the world, Christ's work in sinful flesh, and the Spirit's assurance of salvation in the soul of the believer, the coming of Christ in His glory, and the work of the Spirit by outward signs and gifts to testify thereto; now that the witnesses to these the foundations of the faith and hope as it is in Jesus Christ, are everywhere throughout Scotland contemned and spoken against, we may rest assured that the Lord will honour them, and speak for them from heaven; as He did heretofore for the apostles and disciples rejected from the synagogue, when He stretched forth His hand to heal, and caused signs and wonders to be done by the name of His holy child Jesus.

There are many other causes which might be enumerated for the cessation in the Church of these wonderful works and gifts of the Holy Ghost: but I think they all resolve themselves into these three, which have been mentioned,—the adoption of the wisdom of the natural man, instead of the foolishness of preaching by the ministers of the word,—the looking unto councils and assemblies of the Church for the determination of questions, instead of appealing them directly to the Holy Ghost,—the reposing on the protection of the king of the state, instead of the protection of the Head of the Church. These three causes have conspired together to produce an almost total blindness unto, and silence upon, the glory of Christ, and the heavenly things connected therewith; whence also it hath come to pass, as of necessity, that the Spirit, having nothing to witness to, hath ceased from His witness. But whose fault was all this? Ours, be sure, and not Christ's or God's; and when we cease from our backslidings and return unto the Lord, will not the Lord return unto us? Will He fail of His promise? Is His Church not His Church still? Are we straitened in Him? Verily no: we are straitened in ourselves: all this hath come upon us for our unfaithfulness and unbelief. Therefore hold up your heads, brethren, for your redemption draweth nigh; lift up your voice like a trumpet, for your salvation cometh; open your mouth wide, and it shall be filled. A day of glory is dawning upon the Church, and a day of strength. She is about to be separated from the dross, and to shine like the molten gold; and the dross indeed will be blown away by the

windy storm that is arising. I feel it: He is sitting as a refiner amongst the sons of Levi. I feel it: it is a day of searching. As the masters of the synagogue searched the houses of the Jews for leaven, to destroy it, if any should be found, before the days of unleavened bread, so He whose eyes are like a flame of fire is searching the hearts of His people, to see if there be in them any leaven of malice and iniquity, that they may be wholly an unleavened lump, holiness unto the Lord, and ready for the Master's use when He shall appear. Therefore I say unto the churches in this land abiding, and unto all the angels of the churches, "Remember how ye have received and heard;" and I add therewith the two other words of our great Shepherd, "Hold fast and repent."

The word translated, "hold fast," is the same which in the epistle preceding is translated "keep," and not the same with that which is there translated "hold fast;" and would have been better translated here, as in the former instance, "keep." It does not convey in the original the idea of any force exercised to wrest the thing away; but simply the duty of carefully preserving that which hath been committed to our trust. It is the word commonly used in the expression, "keeping the commandments;" and is three times used in this chapter, besides in the place before, as ver. 8, in praise of the angel of Philadelphia, "Thou hast kept my word;" and again, (ver. 10,) "Thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation." To this duty of keeping what hath been committed to His trust, the angel of the Church of Sardis is called, indicating to us, that every gift of God, and every word of God, is secured to us, only upon the condition of our own faithfulness in keeping it. This ought to be of itself a sufficient answer to those who ask, Wherefore have the gifts of the Church ceased? The answer is, The Church was not careful to keep them; and so it is with every gift, whether of creation, of providence, or of grace; and so it must be, in all gifts from a holy God, unto a responsible creature. If God were not to call an account, He would neither be acting the part of a holy God nor honouring the dignity of a responsible creature; and if He were not to visit the misuse of His gifts with the diminution or withdrawal of them, He would be the patron of unholiness, ingratitude, and disobedience. At first He endued man with free will, and lordship over the creatures; both of which gifts he sacrificed by the one act of listening to the voice of the creature whose lord he was, and so lost the freedom of his will, and had it brought into bondage to the creation possessed by that evil spirit who spake in the serpent. So, also, the angels kept not their first estate, and are reserved for chains of darkness

against the judgment of the great day. Christ, the Redeemer, took up things as He found them; took the will under its bondage, and the flesh under its law of sin and death, and the creation under the dominion of the devil, and prevailed to cast the devil out, to condemn sin in the flesh, and to redeem the will of man, and make it at all points harmonious with the will of God. And having accomplished this work, whereof the proof is in His resurrection, He requires of His people to keep that of which He put them in possession; that is, to keep their mind or will obedient unto God, their flesh with the sin in it condemned, the world with the devil in it cast out. We have body, soul, and spirit, to preserve blameless until the day of the Lord; and because no mere man could do this, until the Son of God came and did it for us, so no man can keep what he did otherwise than by having the Son of God indwelling in him. It is Christ in us who keeps the house clean, which Christ cleansed; and keeps the tenant free, whom Christ set free. Nevertheless this is not done without great personal sacrifice and self-denial on our parts. For we are not like a wheel to be whirled round the other way at the will of another, nor like a balance to be poised down by an additional weight; but we are creatures with a will, though in bondage—with a mind, though alienated from God by the wickedness that is in us: and Christ in us is a purely spiritual presence, working in and upon the mind by knowledge, by love, and other spiritual applications, which, receiving the renewed mind, is called upon to gird itself to the work of denying the course and inclination of nature, of keeping alive its communion and fellowship with God, of mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, of denying the world, and being transformed by the renewing of the mind. Now this work of believing in Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and, having believed, of testifying to the wisdom which we have received, and enjoying cleanness of conscience, and devoting ourselves to the Lord, and escaping free from all bondage, is a heavy, laborious, painful work, and needeth to be encouraged and sustained by every means whatsoever. I say not but that the work is its own reward, and that we ought to love holiness for its own sake, yea, and glory in the freedom with which the Son hath made us free; but truly, with all the advantages of promise and hope, and with all the first-fruits of that glorious reward, the Church hath ever found it a heavy labour to persevere in the work of keeping that which is committed to her trust. And therefore it is, that the gracious Lord,—when, by rising from the dead, He had set man upon his feet again, and by ascending into heaven had received the reward for that work accomplished, when He had re-

ceived the celestial throne, in reward for having redeemed the earthly kingdom,—sent down a first-fruits of that heavenly treasure and glory, for the purpose of encouraging those who had set their shoulders heartily to the work of persevering in that redemption, which for them He had wrought out. To those who were diligently keeping the earthly glory which His resurrection accomplished, and glorifying God on the earth, as He had done, He did send down the first fruits of their reward, as an encouragement to them to go on, to keep the faith, and finish their course with joy. And I believe, that, while the Church stood to it, and preserved her holiness, and love, and liberty, and loyalty to God, she was fed and strengthened from that celestial fountain of the Holy Ghost. But as she failed to keep herself unpolluted from the world and the flesh, and ceased to be a witness of Jesus and the resurrection, the Lord in glory, whose righteousness is His Father's righteousness, must withdraw His countenance from His faithless spouse, and leave her forlorn of those celestial ornaments with which her beauty was worthily bedecked.

All glorious as the sun, with a crown of twelve stars, and raiment whiter than any fuller could white them, she stood on earth the mother of saints, the innocent object of all the world's contempt and hate, the beloved object of the Lord of heaven. And He left her not alone, but He fed her with celestial food, and gave her wings as the eagle, that she might ascend on high, and commune with heaven. While thus she stood faithful to her Lord, she was honoured of her Lord with heavenly gifts, wherewithal she might bless, not her own children only, but the recreant world, and teach the enemies of God what was the grace and mercy of Him against whom they were in arms. "Keep," saith Christ to the Church of Sardis; and "keep," say I, in His name, unto the Protestant Churches, keep faithful unto Christ; keep the standing of redeemed men, free and not using your liberty as a cloak of licentiousness; walk as He also walked, and crucify the flesh, as He also crucified it; perfect holiness as He also perfected it; have, in one word, the Spirit of Christ, and exhibit the Spirit of Christ, and it shall not be long before you receive the Spirit of power and glory. If the Church would keep the commandments of Christ, Christ would fulfil all His promises to her; and these commandments are not grievous to him who hath the Spirit of Christ: to him who hath it not, they are impossible: but how can the Church have the Spirit of Christ, when not the man Christ Jesus, but the evangelical system is preached to the people. If they would preach Jesus and the resurrection, instead of preaching a set of theological terms and dry moralities, God would use their word to

beget Christ in the hearts of the people; and to the babes of Christ thus begotten by God, it would come easy to bear His yoke, and to carry His burden. But with their preaching of natural things to the natural man, with their words of natural wisdom, they have made a Church of hypocrites and unbelievers, worshippers of reason, and haters of everything supernatural; so that they cannot receive the wisdom which is from God, the spiritual things which are spiritually discerned. This is a great evil under the sun, that by false and ignorant teachers the Lord's flock should be corrupted. But it is still worse, that, when the truth appears in the mouth of faithful teachers, these self-sufficient naturalists and rationalists combine at once to extinguish it as foul error and superstition; and the poor Church is left like a man bewildered, who has wandered till he is weary, and is ready to lay him down and sleep in the cold night, though it should be to rise no more. I feel assured in my own mind, that if our Church do so persecute the faithful in Christ Jesus, God will send upon her some scourge, either from the hand of the Papacy or of Infidelity, perhaps from both; and she will then feel what a poor wreck of her former self she is now become. If, as is truly the case with her, and not with her only, but with every Reformed Church, there be little left to keep, then is there much present to repent of, which is the last injunction of our Shepherd.

It is most comfortable to reflect, that for every disease of man's soul there is a remedy in God's grace; that from every wandering of man's wicked heart there is a way of return unto his Father's house. God is indeed very gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. A man would have despaired of such a servant as this minister of the Church of Sardis; a man would have been ready to cast him off, as utterly hopeless; not so the God-man, "whose ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts; for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." Therefore, without any violence, without any upbraiding, with gentle and kind remonstrance, doth He deal with this squanderer and spendthrift, who thought only of the approbation of man, and set light by the favour of God and of Christ. I am not worthy to be the interpreter, nor art thou, O reader, worthy to have these gracious words interpreted to thee. Let me, as they pass through my mind unto thine, have the first taste of their grace and sweetness. How gentle a Master art Thou, O my Bishop! Verily, verily, Thou art meek and lowly, and with Thee the weary and heavy laden shall find rest unto their souls. O good Shepherd, think of me, and of my flock, in these backsliding times, and enable us by Thy good Spirit to keep and to repent. As Thy servant hath taken upon him to interpret these

words of thine unto the churches, and hath lifted up his hand, and vowed to be faithful, and to set down nought out of favour, or out of malice, grant unto him first of all to repent of all his naughtiness, wickedness, and unfaithfulness in Thy sight, to gird up his loins like a man, and serve Thee with all his heart. In this mind it is, that he undertaketh, without partiality and without hypocrisy, to apply Thy words unto the ministers of Thy Church, and unto their flocks.—Oh I am not ignorant, my brethren, of the sad condition into which we are all declined away. Our strength is gone like to a man dying of consumption: we cannot breathe the element of spiritual life; we have no voice to declare the glorious things of God; and if we had a voice, we have no knowledge of them to set forth. And how is this, O my brethren? God's hand is not removed, His arm is not weakened, His love is not exhausted, His strength is not impaired; and for Christ, hear Him speaking to you the comfortable words of this epistle, for ye are not worse than the angel of the Church of Sardis. Awake, shake yourselves from the dust; arise, and Christ shall give you light. Say not within yourselves, It is not so; we are not so far faded and gone; our beauty is not turned into corruption, nor are our garments moth-eaten. Ah, so thinks the man in the last stage of consumption: he dreams of recovery, and oft is his pale and emaciated cheek flushed with a hectic hue, which, though it look beautiful and healthy to the inexperienced eye, is to the physician the surest symptom of death. And so, be assured, is it with the Church at this present day. Her zeal for doctrine that now of late hath flamed up, betrays only her ignorance and incapacity of entertaining sound dcotrine. Her zeal for discipline reveals only the want of that love which is the soul of discipline. Ah me! what searchings of heart are there not for thee, O my mother Church! Now be convinced, O men and brethren, that we are come to an exceeding low estate, that our garments are moth-eaten, that our beauty is like a fading flower, and our fruitfulness is utterly blighted. Why should we perish for want of taking thought, and timely repentance? Is there no man, is there no intercessor? Oh get ye up into your watch-towers, ye that know the peril of our Zion. Gird on your arms, and stand in the breach, ye mighty and valiant men; lift up your voice and weep, O ye that look upon the desolation of our city; call upon the Lord, for He will have mercy, and will abundantly pardon. I lately dwelt in a house beside a lady who was in the last stage of consumption, which the physicians pronounced one of the most rapid they had ever known, and that it would certainly terminate her days very shortly. In one day, she was made whole and well. So the consumptive Church, the Church almost

entirely consumed away, may, through faith, in one day become whole and well. There is not a minister, the most hardened in transgression, the most dead to every sense of duty, the most subject to the devil, the world, and the flesh, who may not in one day become faithful and true: faith, and repentance the fruit of faith, are not dependent upon time, place, or circumstance for their efficacy, but are entirely supernatural works of the Spirit of Christ. Oh that God would turn the hearts of my brethren to the things which He hath enabled me to write, concerning the present estate of the Church; for it is true, and, being true, ought not for any unworthiness or infirmity in me to be postponed or rejected. O my God, I turn to Thee: Thou art my Comforter. The land is sore afflicted. This day when I write these sorrowful words, such a cloud of apprehension hangeth over this city, as in the memory of man hath not been equalled. A sovereign, beloved of all the people, is advised by the heads of the government not to venture into the capital of his kingdom, nor to partake of the banquet which hath been prepared for him, and a thousand of the chief of his people. And for once, this day, which hath been in ages past a day of festivity and mirth and splendid pageantry, is become a day of fear and dreadful apprehension. The garlands hang all around the halls of the banquet-house, but there is no eye to look upon their beauty: the meats are preparing, but there are no guests to taste of them. Behold the chief ruler of the city, with all his counsellors, are afraid and hide their faces. They called unto feasting, but the Lord hath called unto fasting. It is an omen hard to read: and perhaps the Lord would have it not to be read at all, but to exercise us with its fearful uncertainty. Surely, as in the burden of the valley of vision, the Lord God of hosts did call us to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold there was joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep: but here He arrested us, and said, "Ye shall not eat the flesh, and drink the wine, but ye shall be in perplexity and dismay." Hath He done this in grace and mercy, or hath He done it in judgment? Where is the wise man, skilled in the ways of the Lord, who will give the interpretation thereof? It is a wonderful providence, a providence most strange and wonderful. It is too deep for my understanding; yet dare I to hope, and almost to believe, that it is done in answer to the prayers of the people who know the Lord in this city. I know that at the very time the resolution was come to, prayers were making, by desire, in at least one church, that the Lord would bring the counsels of the wicked to nought; and I fondly hope, that the measures which have been adopted, are in answer to those prayers, and for

the preventing of pillage and bloodshed. God grant that on the morrow I may not have to cancel, or to contradict, what I have now written. Oh that man would believe that judgments of a fearful kind are hanging over this land, and that the Lord lingers to hear if there be any intercessors! But, alas! the Church which should have been the interpreter of providence to the land, and the intercessor between God and the guilty people, we the ministers and elders of the Church have refrained our voice; we have been at ease in Zion; we have not been faithful to our king, our country, or our God. We have been the loudest to speak of glorious and good things; we have sounded forth joyful acclamations, because of the things that are coming on the earth. And of all the Church, who have been the loudest in these prophecies of lies? Those who hold the head the highest, saying, We are the people; those who have taken to themselves the name of Evangelical. From them, and from their reports, and from their most erroneous views, have proceeded these false expectations in the bondage of which the Church is now holden, that she should not be able to know the signs of these times, which even the worldly and the infidel people can discern. Ah me, what have we to repent of, to repent of in dust and ashes!

THE THREATENING.

The good Shepherd having thus given instructions to His unworthy servant, proceedeth to enforce them, by a threatening in case of disobedience; and because, of all His delinquencies, the want of watchfulness was the root, the threatening turns upon this as being inclusive of all the rest. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee." Though in our interpretation of the words, "be watchful," with which the instructions begin, we explained it in a large sense, as applicable to the whole pastoral care, we feel now a disposition to add thereto a more particular application of it, derived from the connexion in which it is here introduced. Not in this passage alone, but in so many besides, is the duty of watchfulness connected with the event of the Lord's appearing, that we make no doubt there is a very frequent, and almost a constant and necessary, connexion between the one and the other. Let me first point out the instances in which the duty of watchfulness is connected with the coming of the Lord. In the 24th of the Gospel by Matthew, which, with the 25th, is a regularly constructed discourse concerning the coming of the Lord, after having declared, that "of the day and hour of His coming knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only;" and

added, that the world should be apprehended by it in the lap of ease, and peace, and carnal security, as by the Flood, and that His saints would be caught away from the side of their nearest and dearest friends, without being able to lend them any help, he adds, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh," (Matt. xxiv. 42–44.) "And having drawn out the same momentous truth into the form of the Parable of the Virgins, He concludes it in like manner with these words: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh," (xxv. 13.) This passage is the more to be noted, as containing the same similitude of the thief which is in our text. And this similitude is drawn out into a practical form by the apostle, in that very comfortable discourse upon the second advent, contained in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, (iv. 18; v. 12.) He there refers to it as a thing constantly known in the churches, that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," (v. 2,) and that the churches knowing this were so enlightened as that it should not overtake them as a thief; and by their expectation of that glorious event he denominates them "children of the day," as our Lord in another place calleth them "children of the resurrection;" and therefore, says he, "Let us not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober." In another place also, and that a passage of the Revelations, is the same duty of watchfulness connected with the Lord's coming as a thief: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame," (Rev. xvi. 15.) How incumbent the duty of watchfulness is upon all, and how it is connected with the coming of the Lord and the impenetrable secrecy of the time thereof, is strikingly set forth, and oft repeated in the following words of Mark's Gospel: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore, (for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;) lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch," (Mark xiii. 32–37.) Of such watchful-

ness, the blessed reward is variously set forth in Scripture, particularly in these two passages of Luke's Gospel: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them," (xii. 37.) "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man," (xxi. 36.)

From these examples it is manifest that the duty of watchfulness is not accidentally but regularly and formally connected with the uncertainty of the Lord's coming. I do not say that this is the only ground of watchfulness laid down in the Scriptures; for Peter saith, "Be sober, be vigilant, (watch,) because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour:" but that it is the common and formal ground of watchfulness presented to the Christian Church. And while I say this positively, I assert negatively, that the uncertainty of life, and the nearness of death, is not the formal ground of watchfulness given in the Scriptures; though it be so by popular preachers, who thereby make void the coming of the Lord, as a practical topic of all preaching of the gospel. Now, wherefore the coming of the Lord should thus be continually made the ground of watchfulness, is evident to any one who will take the Lord's own views of His Church. This He representeth by various similitudes; as of a household of servants, whose master is gone forth to a wedding, which in Eastern countries took place in the fore-night, and left his servants in charge to sit up and wait till he should come home again: of a nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, and meanwhile having set his servants up in trade, returneth to reward them with dignities according to their diligence: of a thief, who chooseth the sleepy hour of midnight to break into the house and plunder it of its goods. The ideas out of which these and all other similitudes are composed, are, first, that by His former coming He purchased the world, and the inhabitants thereof with His precious blood, and by His resurrection from the dead was by God anointed Christ and Lord thereof. So that from thenceforth every living soul is called upon by its Creator to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth for its Lord and Master; and those His citizens, who say, We will not have this man to reign over us, shall He, when He comes again, burn together with their city in fire unquenchable. This now, being by the gospel preached to every creature under heaven, puts every creature, king, and subject, master and servant, into the condition of responsible agents, tenants and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to give an account to Him of their

several stewardships whenever He shall appear; which appearance being hidden from every creature, puts every creature that hath been is, or shall be till His coming, into the dutiful position of having his house in order, his account ready, his lamp burning, his loins girt, ready to receive his Lord. And all this as they shall be answerable to God in the great day; for God, by the resurrection, hath given all lordship and all judgment to the Son. The second idea contained in these similitudes is, that the Church in particular, that is, those who acknowledge Christ's lordship, do thereupon receive a charge and trust; and that no mean one, being no less than all His goods and gifts, whereby they are appointed to hold up before the unbelieving world such an aspect of the risen and glorified Jesus as may present him before the world, and teach them the honour which is due unto His name, and the blessedness in time and eternity which accrueth unto those who faithfully yield Him homage. Without such a living witness and image of His glory, it is manifest that the world could neither know nor acknowledge the benefit which it hath derived from, and the duty which it oweth to, its Lord and Redeemer. But if the Church, not keeping her goods and gifts, do put partially represent the fulness of her Lord; or if, conceiving selfishness, she lie unto the world, and say, He redeemed thee not, He loved thee not, He did for thee nothing at all, then is she become a faithless, false witness, who for her perjury will soon be made away with. And if any Church shall cast the brethren out for maintaining that Christ by His death purchased the whole world, and will not repent of her misdeeds, she shall, after certain days of grace, be utterly destroyed. —The third idea which goes to the composition of these parables concerning the kingdom of heaven, is, that the Lord of the world and the Head of the Church, shall come to exact an account of every mortal creature, with respect to all His words and works, at a time which no mortal creature knoweth of, nor can by any means attain the knowledge of, so as to be able to say positively, It shall be at or after such a time; or negatively, It shall not be till after such a time. This inscrutable uncertainty of the time of the Master's coming is that which imposes continual watchfulness upon every generation, and upon every individual of every generation. It is very simple, We know not when He is to come, and therefore we must be ever ready. It is a blasphemy to say, Christ will not come to-morrow; and it is a blasphemy to say, To-morrow He will come. In what condition then is the Church at present, which dareth to say He will not come till after a millennium which is not yet begun? This is another of your traditions by which you have made the Scriptures void; and yet these are the people, who, speaking against

the manifest truth, do say, that we who study prophetic events, and prophetic numbers, have fixed the day, and month, and year, of Messiah's coming: to which we answer, first, It is a lie; and, secondly, Take the beam out of your own eye before you look for the mote in your brother's. How dare you blaspheme by fixing negatively, that Messiah will not come till after a millennium not yet begun? Poor men, in laying a snare for your laborious brethren, who are doing God's work the best way they can, you have stumbled into a trap, and are there fast holden. Get out the soonest and the best way you can; for until you explode that opinion, or rather I should say that dogma,—for it is your creed upon the subject, ay, and your practical faith,—you never shall be able to watch for a coming of the Son of man which you believe to be so far off; and so you are fain to construct a new ground of watchfulness out of the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death. O men, the life which you have to do with us Christians, is an everlasting life, which knows no death: the death which you have to do with is a death without a fear, without a sting; "death is yours." What a thing it is to have turned away from that manifestation of the love of God, from that congregation of the elect, from that joyful meeting with the Son of man, and dwelling with Him in His Father's glory and kingdom; from this consummation of all that is blessed, to have turned away, in order to contemplate the terrors of death, and the painful separation from the body, and from all friends we hold dear; not only to have bereft us of the Lord's coming, but to have conjured up again the terrors of death and the grave, which Christ had conjured away from His Church for ever. Oh what spoliation! Oh what mockery! Oh what unfeeling cruelty, have these doctors been guilty of towards Christ's poor flock! Sure there is a day of fierce and fiery retribution at hand, for all who love not, who set light by, and speak against, the coming of the Lord.—The fourth, and last idea contained in these passages of Scripture, which connect watchfulness with the coming of the Lord, is this, that when He comes, the whole house, both Church and world, shall be in a deep sleep, as a house at the midnight, which for this reason is called the dead hour of the night. And as the thief comes upon the house all at unawares, so upon the world shall its Redeemer come. Not indeed like the thief, to take what is not His own, but all unwelcome as He, and all unexpected; and as the thief, with stealthy foot, advanceth upon a peaceful slumbering house to break into it, and take whatever is most precious and carry it off, so shall Christ come into the strong man's house, into Satan's usurped princedom of the earth, and thence convey whatever is most precious, the gold and the silver, and the

precious stones, rifling the grave for precious dust, and searching the corners of the earth for holy men, and thus shall the Dove prove Himself wiser than the serpent, and the Lamb mightier than the roaring lion. That symbol of the thief hath in it more than men suppose. It is not for nought that Christ took so mean and unworthy an epithet. It distinguishes between the act of His privily conveying away His elect into the cloud of His apparent glory, and the act of His presenting them on the earth in the manifested glory of the New Jerusalem. It is as if our Alfred, when he stole his way into the Norman's camp, had taken thence his crown secretly and privily, with which being royally adorned, he should come in no harper's disguise, but in the right of England's king, to destroy the leaguer of England's foes: so Christ comes stealing on in midnight calmness, and having carried of His royal queen, in base captivity and thraldom held, He returns in triumph along with her, and with strength of hand beats the usurpers to the dust, and casts them forth for ever. And accordingly they for whom He comes as the thief, are those who have their garments clean; and those with whom He comes as a king, are the same company arrayed in those garments which they had kept undefiled, (Rev. xvi. 15; xix. 14.)

These are the considerations which bind watchfulness upon the Church, and upon the world, as an unceasing duty; to wit, our responsibility to Christ for all our gifts natural, purchased by Him from death and the grave, and for all our gifts spiritual, bequeathed by Him from on high: the inscrutable secrecy which hangs over His coming, insomuch that, without trespassing upon the Father's prerogative, we may not cease daily looking for the giving up of our stewardship, and the inspection of all our accounts; the forewarning, that when that day shall come, the world and the Church shall alike be found unprepared, the servants smiting their fellow-servants, and saying, The Lord delayeth His coming, the kings of the nations and the rulers of the people combining against the Lord. These considerations, together with the blessedness which is everywhere assured unto the watchful, were intended by our great Bishop to preserve in the Church a continual good order and readiness for His appearing. And doubtless they are well fitted, and altogether sufficient for that holy end; for never yet did sentinel sleep on his post, when he was expecting his captain to make his rounds, nor porter neglect the gate when he was expecting his master to knock. But the Church, yielding to the flesh, and inclining to the world, and ceasing from the desire of Christ's glory, and consulting only for her own safety and worldly welfare, did cease from loving or desiring the appearance of her Lord, to whom her conscience testified that she

had been unfaithful; and so breaking the inscrutable secret of the Father, she took upon her to say, The Lord delayeth His coming, and began to eat and drink with the drunken. By and by the coming of the Lord was altogether forgotten, until it hath become, as we now find it, the thing least thought of, instead of being the thing most thought of,—the thing at the far end of all things, instead of being the thing nearest at hand. And now that God hath stirred up His faithful servants to tell her of that glorious event, with all its celestial accompaniments, behold they smite us on the cheek, and, being smitten, let us turn unto them the other also. Meanwhile, because watchfulness is a Christian duty, which cannot be dispensed with, the Church, disconnecting it from its true and right motive, hath cast about to find some other ground on which to enforce it, and hath pitched upon the uncertainty of a man's life, and the account which, upon his death, they deem that he hath to render up, of all the works done in the flesh. And so have we death in all its natural and artificial terrors represented to the Church, and the fear of death with all diligence propagated abroad, from which Christ died to deliver us. Along with this, a whole system of extravagance, if not of error, hath come in concerning the time of the judgment, and the state of the separate soul, and the resurrection, and the glory, and the kingdom; and a high way hath been made for all sorts of airy speculations, concerning the elysian and the infernal regions, into which the souls of men depart at death. Purgatory and the numerous limbos of the Roman Church have all come trooping in by this open breach, to do the work of watchfulness, which Christ would have done by the hope and desire of His coming. And we Protestants have only been preserved from the same figments, by having the Scriptures in our hands, without using those Scriptures to enlighten ourselves as to the true form of doctrine concerning the future: nay, we have gone farther than the Papists in this, that we have flatly dared to assert, and commonly to preach, that the coming of the Lord means the day of a man's death; as they hold forth in almost all the churches. The liberty which is taken with the word of God passeth all comprehension, they might with as much propriety aver, that the creation of the world in the beginning of the Bible means the day of my birth, and nothing more, as that the coming of the Lord means the day of my death. Rather many times would I confess my ignorance of the text, and, with respect to the commentators, say with the old Scottish minister, "Better let sleeping dogs lie," than so distort and falsify the holy word of God.

The consequence of this divorcement of the duty of watchfulness

from its proper motive, hath been to bring the Church into the most unwatchful and unready condition; for God's method of producing morality is not to be meddled with. His system of doctrine is commensurate with His system of duty; and if you will not know or believe the one, you shall not discharge the other. As well might you expect, without the doctrine of the atonement wrought by the blood of Christ, to bring cleanness upon the conscience, and peace towards God; as well might you expect without the doctrine of Christ's holiness in sinful flesh, to produce holiness in us who have sinful flesh; as well might you expect without the doctrine of election to produce dependence upon God, and without the doctrine of Christ's Headship to produce unity in the Church; as you may expect, without the doctrine of the Lord's coming at an unknown and unknowable time, to produce watchfulness in the Church. You may get up any substitute you please, you may adorn it with what eloquence you please, and it may look very well to the carnal eye; but it will never work the effect upon the spiritual mind. You want the power, the heart-power, in wanting the doctrine; and it is a vain and idle attempt to produce the heart-obedience without the heart-power. Watchfulness, with all its sister graces of diligence, order, hope, desire, and faithfulness, can only be obtained through the knowledge and belief of the coming of the Lord in His glory to reward, with the presence, and the city, and the kingdom, and the priesthood of God, all those who are found diligently looking for His appearance.

Before leaving this topic of the Epistle to the Church of Sardis, it is further to be observed, that His coming on any one as a thief, is put forth as the punishment of their remissness and indifference and neglect of watchfulness: "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." And to make the threatening more effective, it is redoubled in a new form: "And thou shalt not know what hour I will come unto thee." How then is this? If it be as we have said, that no one can know that hour, and that the Son of man Himself knoweth it not, how is it that it should take the form of a threatening and a punishment upon a certain class of men? How should that which is a universal and unchangeable condition of the whole Church, be now applied as the particular and appropriate visitation upon a certain class of offenders? Does the good Shepherd mean, that upon them who are watchful He will not come as a thief; and that they shall know the hour of His appearing? The answer to these questions is twofold: First, It is universally true that all who are not watchful shall be taken by surprise, and find themselves in a miserable case. To convince ourselves of this,

nothing more is necessary than to refer to the passages of Scripture treating of watchfulness, and quoted at the outset of this topic. Though, therefore, nothing were to be said upon the reverse side of the question, the thing asserted in the text is true; that as a thief, and at an unexpected hour, shall He come upon the unwatchful and unwary: and how great an evil this will prove to them, we shall shortly see. But, secondly, Upon the reverse side of the question, we have to say, that Christ will not come as a thief to those that are watchful; and though the hour of His coming shall be hidden from all till He burst upon the world's view in the clouds of heaven, as heretofore the deluge did in the upbreaking of the fountains of the great deep, and Sodom's overthrow in the opening of the fiery reservoirs of heaven; yet shall it be so announced to the observant by preceding signs in the heavens and the earth and the sea, and over the nations, that they shall be well prepared, and standing all ready for His coming; and though the slumbers of that most sleepy hour shall also steal over them, as over the other virgins, yet shall they not therefore suffer loss from their most gracious Lord; who, seeing by their well-replenished lamps that they were thinking of His name, shall welcome them right gladly to share with Him the marriage supper, at that table which shall never be drawn. The signs of the times, I say, shall keep the watchful alive and alert, and be the means of their deliverance, as heretofore at the destruction of Jerusalem: and this is one reason for which the destruction of Jerusalem is so skilfully interwoven by our Lord with the destruction of the world at His coming; in order to show us that, by the same observance of His instructions which they gave, and, for giving, received deliverance out of Jerusalem, we also shall receive deliverance out of this doomed world. How firmly I believe that the first Christians were saved by observing when the things spoken by Daniel the prophet took place, and then, without delay, seizing the moment of the truce to escape from Jerusalem unto Pella; so firmly do I believe that it is by the diligent observation and clear understanding of the things which are at this moment taking place, that we shall have our lamps burning, and our loins girt ready to meet the Bridegroom when He comes. I have no doubt that those professing believers in Christ who despise the subject of the signs of the times, and of unfulfilled prophecy which these signs open to the studious, will, if they repent not, and that speedily, be found unwatchful, and surprised by Christ as the household wrapped in sleep are by the midnight thief. This is no subject to be trifled with, nor to be spoken upon but with awful earnestness. I take shame to myself, and guilt also, that I do not speak of it in

every company, and to every mortal creature : woe is me, if I hide it. Woe is me, if I be ashamed of His testimony. Oh, it is not a time for smooth and flattering speeches. It is not a time for nice and delicate manners when the ship is creaking in every timber, and the ocean stream flowing in at every seam. What loud, what vehement cries from man to man do then arise, what shrill, what sharp orders from the commander, what tight, what bracing work, what manly vigour in every arm, what eager looks in every eye! Ah me! the manly activity, the noble and true-hearted devotedness of a crew of British mariners in the midst of the whirlwinds and hurricanes of the deep, are the proper emblem of what we, who know these times and the seasons, should now be doing and speaking in the midst of the Church.

That by some means or other, those who are looking for Christ's appearing shall be prepared for the same, though they continue ignorant of the very hour and day, is manifest from all the Scriptures, and particularly from that passage of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, to which we have already referred; wherein it is distinctly said, that while the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night to others, it shall not so come to the brethren who know the Lord, and look for His appearing: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober," (1 Thess. v. 4–6.) Now what is the reason here assigned for their escaping the common surprise? First, because they are children of the light and the day, and not in darkness as others; that is, because they are full of information and knowledge upon the subject of the Lord's coming, being taught by the holy apostles, as well as by the Lord himself; alas! would it were so still with the churches. Secondly, because in consequence of this, their light and knowledge of the subject, they do not sleep as others, but watch, and are sober; in one word, it is signified in this remarkable passage, that the knowledge and hope of Christ's coming worked the same effects upon the Church to preserve her from sleep, and to keep her wakeful, as light doth upon the natural world; and that it is as unnatural for her to give herself to chambering and drunkenness, and deep sleep, when illuminated with the knowledge of the Lord's coming, as it is for men to drink and sleep in the day season. Some reckless and regardless persons there be, who will, even in the day time, be found drunk and weighed down with sleep; but this is rare, and cannot be taken as the ground of any similitude. Yet is it an exception worthy the attention of those who are walking in the

light of the knowledge of the Lord's appearing, to warn them that it is possible, even for them, to become worldly, sensual, and wicked, as was the case with the early heretics of the Millenarian school, and with the Fifth-monarchy men of our own country. And as the open-day drunkard is the most desperate and incurable of all, so are those who, having the light of the coming of the Lord, do yet permit themselves in the worldliness and wickedness of others.

It doth but remain that we should explain wherein consisteth the point and pertinancy of this rebuke, and the nature of the evil which it threatens. It is pertinent, because not otherwise than by watchfulness can the direful calamity of being plundered of all our hopes as Christians be prevented, and watchfulness cannot be promoted otherwise than by the knowledge and belief of the Lord's coming. In this, as in all other cases, the punishment is after the nature, and in the way of the offence. The offence consisteth in neglecting all the glorious promises connected with the event of the Lord's coming. The judgment is in changing that event from being one of glorious promise, to become one of awful threatening; for, that direful judgment will fall upon the Church for neglecting to watch for her Lord, is declared in many parts of Scripture. Take, for example, the following: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," (Matt. xxiv. 44–51.) This passage, though it refer chiefly to rulers of the house, whether civil or ecclesiastical, doth point out to us the awful consequence to all who keep themselves in the dark upon the subject of his appearing, and say within their hearts, "My Lord delayeth His coming;" which the Church at present sayeth, not in her heart, but openly boasteth, saying, He will not come for at least a thousand years. That false thought leads on to the evil consequence of cruelty and carnal indulgence; in the midst of which Christ makes an end of them and of their doings for ever. That it is vain for them to flee for succour and redress then, is put beyond doubt, by the Parable of the Virgins, wherein they are re-

presented as at length courting those whom they had smitten, and making preparations for that which they had despised; but neither the one nor the other avail to deliver them from the fearful doom of being excluded from the marriage-chamber of the Bridegroom. Not only so, but in the corresponding passage of the 14th chapter of the Revelations, they are exposed as hypocrites to the gaze of the world,—"lest he walk naked and they see his shame:" pretending to be believers in Christ, they are proved to be unbelievers; pretending to be looking for Him, they are proved not to have been looking for Him. When their brethren, walking with them by the way, sleeping with them in the same bed, grinding at the same mill, have been caught up by Christ, and openly acknowledged as His people, they are left exposed to their shame, and fairly convicted before the world as hypocrites and deceivers, dishonoured of God, dishonoured of men; they shall be cast out like salt which hath lost its savour, to be trodden under foot. Ah, let us search ourselves, for the Searcher is at hand; let us judge ourselves, for the Judge is at the door. Ye, my brethren, who know the truth of the Lord's coming, beware how ye walk in the sight of God. Be watchful in all your hearts' thoughts, in all your life's occupations; and strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die, and make your works perfect before God. Remember how ye have received and heard, keep, and repent; for if you will not watch, even upon you shall He come as a thief, and your exposure shall be the greatest of all. God prepare and make us ready. Amen.

THE APPROBATION.

It is the surest mark of a good man that he is observant of what is good in others, and delighteth in all ways to foster and perfect it; and if this disposition of the mind be guarded by righteousness, and prevented from degenerating into flattery, it is the best means of cultivating what is good in all soils, even in the worst and most neglected. It is the law established throughout all nature, that everything should produce its likeness by the communication of itself. God's love shining forth from him, and by us received, produceth love in return: nor did ever any soul love God until that soul hath both known and felt that God had loved it; and because love is the keeping of the commandments, it cometh to pass that the preaching of God's love is the foster-mother of all holiness. But as the love of a parent towards his child is not moved by the desire of being beloved in return, but flows spontaneous from his heart; even so the goodness of God is not served out to His creatures with any view of advantage, but because he

is good, and of very goodness loveth to make his goodness to be known and felt by all. If his goodness fail to produce goodness in return, then is our heart hardened and made insensible, and at length grows utterly reprobate; but his goodness remaineth all the same, shedding itself upon the evil as upon the good, upon the just as upon the unjust.

I am led into this train of thought by having ever presented to me in these epistles the goodness of Christ unto the worst of His servants; of which another instance comes before us in the next topic of our discourse, contained in these words, vers. 3, 4: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." It is not for that Lord who delivered Noah, a preacher of righteousness, from the destruction of the old world, and Lot, a just man, from the overthrow of Sodom, to fail to notice and distinguish in the Church of Sardis those persons, however few, who kept their garments undefiled: and this He doth, in the language appropriate to that good Shepherd who "calleth His own sheep by name," "Thou hast a few *names;*" also, perhaps to rebuke the meanness of the angel of the Church, who preferred a name to live in the mouth of men, to a name to live in his Master's estimation. And moreover He doth use this form of expression, to signify that His people are all written by name before Him in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. The remnant whom the Lord had reserved for Himself in the days of Elias, are denominated "seven thousand *knees*," because in bowing the knee to Baal's image stood the act of renouncing the worship of the living and true God: but here, where the temptation stood in the favour of the people, in the good opinion of the public, Christ payeth His approbation to the faithful in terms of their faithfulness, saying, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments." I know that it occurs more than once in Scripture, to apply the word *names* for persons; but I think there is a meaning in the case before us, from the terms of the promise contained in the following verse, whereof two parts concern *the name:* "I will not blot out *his name* out of the book of life, but I will confess his *name* before my Father, and before His angels." The temptation, the approbation, and the promise, are all expressed in terms of the *name.* And wherein the dignity of a name consists, and the corresponding guilt of pretending to a name which is not ours by right, we have already sufficiently shown; and how the wisdom of law confirms our conclusions is seen in this, that to sign with another's name is counted worthy of death,

the truth of the name being regarded as equally sacred with the life of the person. Perhaps also there is a note of dignity contained in the use of the word "name," to those faithful servants, whose commendation is given in these words: "who have not defiled their garments."

This language implies, first, That a Christian hath pure garments given him to keep, and is responsible at all times for their cleanness and purity: and that this is no secondary part of His charge, we gather from these words of chap. xiv.: "Behold, I come; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments;" which point out the cleanness of our garments, as the thing which Christ will look to when He comes to make discrimination between His faithful and hypocritical servants. In the day of His coming, our blessedness shall stand in having garments white and clean: such only He will take with Him, and such also He will bring with Him to triumph over the wicked, (xix. 4.) And this is confirmed by the parable of the marriage supper, which addeth a new and important feature, that the Father, when the Church is presented to Him by Christ, will by no means endure in that glorious company, one single person, who hath not these robes of righteousness. Moreover, if it be inquired how the filthy garments of nature are purified, and preserved pure for us, the answer is given by one of the elders, who said unto John, (Rev. vii. 14,) "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." If then, by the purity of the garment, Christ distinguisheth those whom He will present unto His Father, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," and should any other intrude Himself into that holy presence, He would be "bound hand and foot, and taken away, and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth;" we may well understand how Christ, looking upon the Church of Sardis, doth express His approbation in these terms: "Thou hast a few names that have not defiled their garments." Such were ready for His appearing; they were well pleasing in His sight, and in the sight of His Father.

And now it cometh before us as a most worthy inquiry, why the holiness and acceptancy of the saints should be set forth by such language.

Originally as man was created, he was without a garment: the man and the woman were naked, and they knew it not: but in the eternal estate of glory the saints are represented as clothed in white raiment. This difference between man's original state of innocency, and his eternal state of glory, represented by the matter of their garments, hath its explanation, first, from considering that the garment

is that part of a man's presence which is not of himself, but derived from a foreign source. In the state of innocency, he was unclothed; in the state of glory, he is clothed upon: in the state of innocency, he was simple man; in the state of glory, he is man, with an addition derived from God; having the glory of God, glorified with that glory with which Christ is glorified beside the Father. Manhood created, is manhood alone: manhood saved, is manhood brought into union with God, through the flesh of Christ, and sustained by God, and informed in God, and giving forth the words and ways of God. In one word, it is man *clothed* upon with glory superhuman and Divine. If we follow down the stream of God's revelations, we shall find this idea fully confirmed. The first thing, which, upon his fall, man became conscious to, was his nakedness: he came to know that there was another and a higher state reserved for him, than the nakedness of creation. His fallen nature put forth, by seeking to clothe itself with the leaves of trees, an instinctive appetite for salvation: which sense of nakedness and hope of being clothed upon, God encouraged and rewarded, by making for Adam and his wife coats of skins, with which He clothed them. These skins, I make no doubt, were taken from the animals which God had taught man to offer in sacrifice, and for not offering which, Cain was rejected. The sacrifice is the showing forth of Christ, the Lamb slain to take away the sin of the world. The blood of the sacrifice takes away our guilt, the flesh of it supports our strength, and the skin of it clothes our nakedness; that is, Christ gives us life of His life, body of His body, and appearance of His appearance, beauty of His beauty, and glory of His glory. Under the law the garments of the priests, and of the high priest, were appointed with exactest ceremony by the commandment of God himself: and they might never do the service of God in other garments than those which He had prescribed; white for the priests, and white for the high priest whenever he went into the presence of God; which doth signify that God, in His house, will have none but such as are clothed upon with purity and righteousness, for the white raiment is the righteousness of saints. Now, the Church is called with a heavenly calling, to dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the city of God; and Christ said unto us before He went away, "In my Father's house are many mansions: behold I go to prepare a place for you." Before He departs, He gives us righteousness to keep until He shall come and call us to Himself; and when He goes, He goes to sanctify the heavenly things, and to prepare the tabernacle of God for our reception. Excellent love! most provident mercy! who, there or here, thinks upon us; so let us think only of Him. We are those priests of Christ and of God,

set to do the service of God upon the earth, in His spiritual house, and therefore we should be ever arrayed in undefiled garments. In the prophets also, there is a time spoken of, when not persons, but places also, shall be clothed upon with garments for beauty and for glory, as the high priest was clothed in his outward manifestation. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." And of the New Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven, it is said, "that it hath the glory of God, and that there entereth into it nothing that defileth or maketh a lie." And of the earth also it is said, that it is "full of the glory of the Lord," for all the things which we now behold "shall wax old as doth a garment, as a vesture shall Christ change them, and they shall be changed." This new garment in which creation shall be clothed, is not of itself but of another; and what other than creation is there, save the Creator. Creation now standeth arrayed in vile and filthy garments; which mantle of darkness and defilement its own sin hath spread around it. This the Creator himself, by uniting Himself to it, and it to Him, doth purge away into the lowest hell; and instead thereof, He arrays his original work in holy beauties from the womb of the resurrection-morn.

Besides the idea expressed above, of the garment as signifying something beyond and beside the person arrayed in it, there are other ideas which we shall mention, without illustrating or enforcing them. The garment makes no change in the person whom it covers. No more does the communicated glory of Godhead make any substantial change, or bring any addition to the creature, as originally made by God. Creation hath suffered no diminution of its substance, but shall be in number and in quantity, in law and in subordination, what it was when originally made; but it shall have impressed upon it a power and life, a stability, and beauty, and glory which it possessed not at first, but receiveth through union of Godhead to its substance in the mystery of the Christ. To take an instance; Christ's creature-part, His body and soul, were not more or less than another man's; yet, through Godhead-union, it was not only able to maintain original innocency, such as Adam's had, but to cast off innate impurity, such as the virgin had; and that same body and soul of Christ in glory, is not less or more than ours here on earth, as ours is not more or less than Adam's created: but yet, though numercially one nature, and no more, it hath something far beyond anything created at first, or now extant: and how shall that be represented in natural imagery, but by the garment, which is something in addition to the man, and yet making no change upon

him? This is a great principle, sacrificed entirely, or indeed never thought of, by those speculators who say that Christ's human nature was a new creation. Redemption is not creation added to, as if it were originally defective; but creation upholden against sin's deadly assault, and glorified by God's grace and love. Now this idea of the new dignity, grace, and loveliness, and majesty which the work of redemption giveth to creation, without in anything changing its essence, can only be expressed by that magic power which there is in well-chosen attire, to set off the native graces and properties of the person. Another idea conveyed under this figure of clothing, is derived from the completeness with which it enwraps us round, and covers us on every side, leaving no part naked but the countenance, which is the implement of the soul rather than a part of the body. In this respect, no image is so fit for representing the idea of complete, and not partial, righteousness. Yea, and something more than completeness, an exuberance and superfluity; for that person would think himself but meanly clothed, who had only wherewithal to cover his nakedness. Such is not the clothing of a king and of a priest: it is the ample robe, the flowing mantle, and not the mere covering, which is spoken of in this book. These three ideas,—to wit, first, of a thing not our own, but derived to us from another source; secondly, of a thing which alters us not, though necessary to our well-being and beauty; thirdly, of a thing which completely, and more than completely, enfolds us,—seem to me to make up the substance of the truth contained under the symbol of clothing. "The white raiment is the righteousness of saints;" a true, not a fictitious righteousness; a real substantial purification of soul and body, notwithstanding the law of the flesh, but not self-originated, not self-supplied, derived all from Christ, by Him wrought out, and out of Him derived to us: for "He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Like all other precious truth, Satan hath converted this also to his own false and unholy uses; making men to believe that, because it is derived from Christ, and by Him sustained, it is therefore not really a righteousness wrought in us, but only a garment covering us; and that withal we continue under the cloak to be the same filthy creatures as before, whom God, for Christ's sake, (as they, with seeming piety, express a most impious sentiment,) is pleased to look upon as righteous. If this be what they mean by the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and it is what they commonly express, then is it the vilest of all vile doctrines; comforting and encouraging a sinner in his wickedness, under the false notion that faith entirely covers and protects sin from the judgment of God. The Church,

by this word "imputed righteousness," means to express the great truth that the righteousness which we have in God's sight is altogether derived from another, and becometh ours, not for any worthiness or desert on our part, but wholly from an act of God's grace making it ours. The Church hath been careful to hold two things with respect to righteousness; the first, That it is nowhere to be found in any creature save in the creature part of Christ, and from no other quarter whatever to be derived: the second, That being there in abundance sufficient for the whole world, it is not conveyed to any sinner, otherwise than by an act of God's grace moving him so to do;—the latter securing to God the right of dispensing it; the former, to Christ the honour of being the thing dispensed. He is made of God unto us righteousness and sanctification. I stay not to argue whether the word "imputed" be the best that could be chosen, for it is not with words but truths that I am occupied; and I clearly perceive that these two are the truths which that word was intended by the Church to contain. She never meant to assert, that because it was of Christ's working out for us, and of God's serving out to us, it was not therefore true righteousness, heart righteousness, righteousness in the inward parts, and in the outward also; holiness of body, and holiness of soul; obedience of every member to the law of the Spirit, and to the service of righteousness unto holiness. The Church never meant to convey, by the word imputed, that the righteousness was only skin-deep, or, if we may so speak, only cloak-deep, while all beneath was foul as ever; or that it was a supposititious righteousness, and not a real and substantial; or that it was only a transfer done over from Christ's folio, in the great book of accounts, to ours; or that it was only an insufficient and still impure righteousness, which God ekes out from Christ's inexhaustible store; all these are most unholy and blasphemous insinuations of the devil, under the disguise of that word "imputation," which, when interpreted truly, means God's conveying to us a righteousness which is Christ's property, made ours by an act of God's grace. But because it is Christ's it is perfect; and being made ours, it loseth nothing of its perfectness. God will accept nothing less than perfect holiness; and any one who thinks He will, must be undeceived before He can be saved. What is in Christ for me is perfect righteousness; and if my faith be eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood, I receive a perfect righteousness, in thought, in word, and in deed—in body, in soul, and in spirit. Faith embodies Christ in the believer; and Christ is in the believer a body of holiness, a complete man of holiness; an inward and an outward man as well as a garment. Does any one say,

What hard doctrine? And must I leave off every sin? Yea verily. And must I be always and altogether holy? Even so. And is there no salvation for me on other terms? None. What a fearful doctrine? Oh then, thou lovest sin, brother, dost thou? No. Why then should it be fearful to tell thee to get rid of it altogether? Thou wouldst have reserves, wouldst thou? No. Why then start at a doctrine which asks thee to give thine unreserved self to God? Did I ask thee to work out this perfect righteousness for thyself, thou mightest complain. But when I tell thee that it is in Christ for thee at any time, and at all times to possess thyself of, why complainest thou? If God draw upon thee large bills, is not Christ ready with the supplies: and art thou honoured or dishonoured by the Holy Ghost in being made the agent through whom Christ's fulness might meet His Father's demands. The Father asks perfect holiness: Christ hath wrought out perfect holiness for thee: why murmurest thou? I murmur because I am conscious of past sin. There is forgiveness for it in Christ. But my conscience is defiled by it. There is cleanness of conscience for thee in Christ, and peace with God, and enjoyment of His sweet and gracious face. That is what forgiveness means. Dost thou believe this word? then hath this word made thee clean. Why still murmurest thou? Because I am conscious of present sins. Lovest thou them, or lovest thou them not? I love them not. Then thou shouldest be glad to get rid of them: I have told thee how thou mayest completely get rid of them, by relying on Christ for a perfect righteousness. And yet thou murmurest to be informed how thou mayest be delivered from that thou lovest not. Ah, brother! there is a love of that state of sinning and repenting; thou lovest to have room to come and go with God: thou cravest for licence; thou art in love with imperfection, and while thou art so thou canst not be in love with God who is perfect; nor be living in charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

"The garment undefiled," therefore, is not a complete outward seemliness without a corresponding inward saintliness; which was the evil case, not of those few approved ones, but of the many whom He rebuketh in the Church of Sardis. Nor is it a complete knowledge or faith in the finished work of Christ, without any finished and perfected work in us corresponding thereto; but it is Christ formed within us by the Spirit, and subduing us wholly unto God, and making us to become perfect and complete in Him; so that we sin not, but walk in his footsteps always. But where is the person to whom this did or could apply? and if it doth not apply to any, how should the Lord find even a few in the Church of Sardis to whom it was

applicable? Whether these were perfect, even in those times, or whether there be any now, or whether it be possible that there should be any, is a question, not needing to be settled, in order to understand the case of those whom the Lord commendeth: it is only necessary to perceive that they were believing on Christ for a perfect righteousness; holding Him up as pledged to work this in His members, and in that faith honestly setting about the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. They might, and I have no doubt did, come short of, and transgress against, the law of the Spirit of Life; but they confessed and grieved over it, and came to Christ not only for purification from the stain, but likewise for redemption from the power of their sin; and receiving it, they went forward. The man that is keeping his garments undefiled, and hating even the garment which is spotted by the flesh, is one who resteth on Christ for perfect righteousness, not only for, but in, the believer, and in that faith holdeth on his course; and if he stumble, confesseth his heedlessness, and lamenteth his declension from God; then riseth again, and "presseth towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." It doth not require perfection to have been attained, not to have been for a while enjoyed without interruption; but it requires perfection to be believed to be ours in Christ, and to be unceasingly ensued in our life; and every shortcoming or deviation to be confessed over the Lamb slain, and its guilt purged with His blood; and so forgotten and forgiven, no longer to impede our growth towards the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. The doctrine which I have maintained is as much for the publicans and sinners when they first hear it, as it is for the most advanced saint, who hears it with gladness: and none but the hypocrite and the pharisee will cavil with it when he hath rightly understood it. This will more clearly appear when we shall have answered the question, And when doth a man receive this "pure garment" for the undefiledness of which he is ever afterward held responsible?

I answer this question by one word, At his baptism, in token of which every baptized person in the Primitive Church used then to receive a white garment, to be kept and produced as a witness against him, if at any time he should dishonour the purity of the Christian name. At baptism our old man is put off; which truth to represent in the Primitive Church, they were stripped naked in order to baptism: and being buried with Christ we rise again with Him, and are quickened in newness of life; that "henceforth we being dead to sin should live no longer therein." Therefore saith the apostle, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of un-

righteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," (Rom. vi. 12, 13.) Again, it is written of baptism, "Know ye not that as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ?" If the word baptism hath not changed its meaning, or the sacrament lost the force and efficacy, which were ordained to be in it by God, that holy ordinance doth contain under it the complete sanctification of the person: and his salvation from all the consequences of a guilty conscience; being to the soul what the ark was to Noah, according to that word of the apostle, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh), but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Every baptized person, I say, therefore, under warranty of all Scripture, doth receive a complete purgation from sin in that holy ordinance, "being baptized into the remission (away-putting) of sin, and in order to receive the Holy Ghost." We are answerable, then, for an act of divorcement and separation between our body and sin, for a marriage union of every member of our body to the true body of Christ, which is the source of all holiness. This is the true doctrine of baptism: let the thoughtless, and unlearned, and unbelieving, gnash upon it with their teeth however they may. I say to every baptized man, Thou shouldest be stainless and unpolluted, beautiful and holy in the midst of this evil world, and pleasing in the sight of God as one of the members of His own risen and glorified Son. And it is thy guilt that thou art not so: it is thy pure love of sinning; it is not any necessity of sinning, or any load of temptation, above and beyond thy power to endure: but it is thy pure and simple love of sinning, which hath brought thee into thy present defiled state. And if thou wouldest be brought back to thine original baptismal purity, thou must wash these thy defiled robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb: for which end, that precious blood, for the cleansing away of all wilful sins, done within the Church by baptized persons, is placed for thy use upon the table of the Lord; and thou art earnestly entreated at all times to come and drink inward purification to thy soul. And doing so in faith, thou canst at any time restore thy lost purity: and, therefore, thou art altogether without excuse in being ever found without thy garments, thy body, and thy soul and spirit, spotless in the sight of God and of Christ. How much this was the doctrine of the Primitive Church will appear by the following extract from Bingham's "Ecclesiastical Antiquities:"—

"Whitsunday is said to be so called from this custom of wearing white robes after baptism. These being laid aside were preserved

in the vestries of the churches, as an evidence against men, if afterward they violated the professions which they made in baptism. A remarkable instance of which we have related in Victor Uticensis, concerning one Elpidiphorus, a citizen of Carthage, who having a long time lived in the communion of the Church, at last turned Arian, and became a bitter enemy to the orthodox in the Vandalic persecution. Among others whom he summoned before him as their judge, was one Muretta, a deacon, who had been sponsor for him at his baptism. He, being ready to be put upon the rack, produced against him these white robes, with which he had been clothed at his baptism; and with words melting all the whole city into tears, he thus bespoke him:—'These are the garments, O Elpidiphorus, thou minister of error, which shall accuse thee when the Majesty of the great Judge shall appear: these I will diligently keep as a testimony of thy ruin, which shall depress thee to the bottom of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; these are they that were girt about thee, when thou camest immaculate out of the holy font: these are they that shall bitterly pursue thee, when thou shalt begin to take thy portion in the flames of hell; because thou hast clothed thyself with cursing as with a garment, and hast cast off the sacred obligation of thy baptism, and the true faith which thou didst then profess and take upon thee.' So that the design of this significant ceremony was, first, to represent that innocence and angelical purity which every man obtained by the remission of his sins in baptism, and then to remind them of the obligations and professions they had entered into, which, if they violated, would rise up as so many accusations at the day of judgment."—*The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book xii. sec. 3.

To those few names in the Church of Sardis who were keeping their garments undefiled by a firm faith upon Christ their risen Head, for perfect holiness, by a diligent pursuit and practice of the same, and a continual application to the blood of sprinkling, for the cleansing of every stain which sin brought upon their conscience, the good Shepherd doth promise, as their proper and acceptable reward, "they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." The undefiled garments I understand to be a holy walk and conversation, in the midst of a sinful world, and begirt with sinful flesh, continually presenting occasions of pollution, calling for the utmost watchfulness and self-denial: the white garments, I understand to mean, the same flesh given to us, in that glorified state which assumed in the person of our Lord on the mount of transfiguration, "when His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Now, forasmuch as the thing which undergoes a change

in the resurrection is not the soul but the body, which, from its present vileness, becometh fashioned after the likeness of Christ's glorious body, we are forced to the conclusion, that it is specially to the holiness of our flesh, to which the undefiled garments hath reference in the passage before us. The soul being quickened, by the seed of the word, which liveth and abideth for ever, being born again of water and of the Spirit, hath given to it the charge of all the members of the body, to reclaim and recover them from the law of sin and death, unto the dominion of the law of the Spirit of life. As Christ being generated man of the Holy Ghost in the virgin's womb, had from thenceforth the charge of all the members of His body, to present them holy unto God always, and bring them immaculate to the sacrifice of the accursed tree; which also He did, and so achieved the redemption of man, and of man's dependent world; even so every Christian, having received from Jesus power to become a son of God, and being regenerate into the body of Christ, is required from that time forth until his change come, to present the members of his body blameless and faultless in the presence of their righteous God. In which work of sanctification standeth the triumph of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, over a rebellious and sinful creation;—of Christ, in that He doth empower the sons of men to yield themselves obedient to the law of holiness, in despite of the law of sin, which is in their members and the world; of the Father, in that Christ, who thus triumphs in His members, triumphed Himself by the Father who dwelt in Him, and glorified the Father, and is the monument of the Father's glory, which He doth perpetuate in every saint; of the Holy Ghost, in that the Father and Christ being out of the world, He doth fetch forth their unction and power, and implant it in the believer in the world, and doth make it there to live and reign, despite of a sinful and unbelieving world; of God, in that He receiveth the end of creation in the service of His creature man, and is testified to have had no hand in the fall, and to be no party to sin, by means of a race of men, the Church, who triumph over sin, and shall triumph over death, through faith in His name. All these Divine triumphs are wrought by means of men in sinful flesh, and are made only the more gloriously apparent, by the condition of natural sinfulness in which our members are found, and continue till the end. For, through that law of nature, they sympathise with all the forms of wickedness which are in the world, and would fain draw aside and seduce the soul, to become the queen and the mistress of the mystery of iniquity, which is working in all the chambers of nature: but the soul, informed with the knowledge, love, honour, and obedience of God the Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost, believing that Jesus, the righteous One, came in flesh of sin, and in flesh of sin was holy; and believing also that He is Lord of all, to hold up the obedient, and the disobedient to put down, doth, notwithstanding of the heaven which the flesh portrays in natural things, cleave unto the heaven of faith and hope, which is to be revealed unto her at the coming of the Lord; and of very willingness (willingness made willing by Christ in her) doth set at nought, despise, and trample under foot all natural beauties, attractions, and pleasures, and draw every member of the body and the mind forth from under their base thraldom, into the glorious liberty of holiness; fulfilling to the letter that amplest precept, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) Let no one despise the body, or give it up as a prey to the enemy. The body is the very pledge of battle; in the winning or losing of which, God and Christ are glorified or dishonoured. The soul is the combatant for God; and Christ is the soul's life to combat: and faith, which presupposes knowledge, is the means of preserving life and strength in the soul to sustain the combat: but the prize is indeed the body, the members of the body, to present their perfect holiness unto the Lord, and to take them out of the hands of sin, and to devote them to the obedience of one who is not of the world, even the Father; to one who is not in the world, even Christ; that it may be proved that God and Christ do reign, and not the world, that they are over the world, and are redeeming souls of men from the world's bondage, and restoring them again to their lost sovereignty over the members of the body, and through them over all the chambers of the natural and visible world. This is the dignity of kings and priests which we have *now*; a truly spiritual kingdom which we do *now* exercise; the kingdom of God, its power, and its holiness within us even *now*.

But this is not otherwise to be attained, than by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, so soon as ever a sin-spot appears upon our raiment, which, being in faith applied, doth straightway take it away, and leave it undefiled as before. But if any one feel that he is thoroughly corrupt, he must even be washed every whit, "in the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness." And this is open to the greatest sinner, who hath only to be baptized therein,—that is, to exercise faith on the worthiness of Christ's blood to atone for all sin,—and to receive it as the boon of the grace of

God to a guilty soul, in order to be delivered from his guiltiness. Baptism unlocks the fountain: he who hath been baptized hath it unlocked; one who hath not been baptized comes to baptism in order to have it unlocked, and ever afterwards, he is to look upon it, as open to him at all hours of the night and of the day. But if he should never after baptism have to go thither, how honourable to his faithfulness! Alas! that we should have so often to present ourselves anew to be cleansed. It is our guilt, and it is our heavy affliction; it is not our infirmity, it is our sin; it is not to be palliated, because every time we do apply to the fountain, we honour its wondrous and Divine virtues. We are not to do evil, that grace may abound: nor yet to palliate our evil deeds, because grace hath thereby been shown to be abundant. It should be our shame and dishonour, the hanging of our heads, and the covering of our loins with sackcloth, our pain and our penance, our tribulation and our anguish, that being members of the Church of God, and clothed with its holy robe, we should ever be less than pure and holy and undefiled. Every spot upon it should make us hang our heads before men who behold it; and these which men behold not, should cost us no less grief because they grieve the Holy Spirit within us, and are odious in His sight, who understandeth heart-secrets, and trieth the reins of the children of men. To men so proved, and exercised with trials from sinful temptations, and occasionally to their soul's humbling, overtaken of sinful desires and actings, what an acceptable promise is this before us, that they shall walk with Christ in white, in a body which cannot be any more disputed for by sin, or assaulted by Satan; in robes which cannot be defiled, but are ever beautiful, as on that bridal-morn, when we were first arrayed in them to meet the bridegroom! "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," (Rev. xix. 8.) This is quite another condition of the saint from that undefiledness in which he is now required to preserve himself: just as Christ's body glorified was different from His body humbled; both holy, the one holiness under proof, the other holiness rewarded;—the one, the holiness of God burning up iniquity in the flesh; the other, the same flesh glorified by the mighty power of God;—the one, God's goodly creature, which sin had darkened and defiled, cast into the furnace to prove its Creator's handiwork still to be in it; the other, the same goodly creature brought forth from the furnace like gold seven times refined. The present duty of a Christian is to be holy in all manner of conversation, notwithstanding all temptations to the contrary: this is his very calling, his profession, and his use in the world, to yield a holiness perfect and complete.

When James would define what religion is, what terms doth he use, but those which I have been labouring under this head of my discourse to unfold? "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep Himself unspotted from the world," (James i. 26, 27.) Now, what sort of a man he meaneth, by one that bridleth his tongue, himself declareth in these words: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body," (iii. 2.) Those who do thus honour and glorify the holiness of God with their bodies, are counted worthy of partaking the glory of Christ: those who are faithful unto the death, are counted worthy of the resurrection in holy beauties from the womb of the morning: those who persevere in the word and testimony of God, and count not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course, and keep the faith, have given to them this robe of eternal and incorruptible righteousness; according as it is written of the martyrs,—"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled," (Rev. vi. 11.) But this leads into the subject of the promise; before entering upon which, we have one remark to make as to the worthiness of those who receive these white garments.

And that they are worthy, no man believing the word of Christ may doubt, who says, "for they are worthy." We might as well dispute Christ's "worthiness" to open the book, and to receive the seven-fold homage of the angelic host, recounted in the 5th chapter, as dispute the worthiness of the saints to receive these white robes of glory. Wherein then consisteth this their worthiness of such resplendent glory and inestimable reward? In their having kept themselves, body, soul, and spirit blameless, until the coming of the Lord. And how did they this great thing? By faith in the sanctifying blood of Jesus, who offered Himself upon the cross without spot and blameless. For by no other element in the wide world besides, can sins be washed out; as it is written, "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:" "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all iniquity:" "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" One who is clean, is one who is believing in the power of Christ to cleanse, and honouring Him as our righteousness and sanctification: one

who is ever clean, is one who in all his thoughts and ways is so giving the confidence of his heart unto the Lord's Christ, whom "God hath exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." And more than this God requireth not of any creature, nor is more than this necessary for the perfection of any creature. No more doth God require than to be trusted in: there needeth not to bring a price besides, or to add a work beside; for that were paying God with His own. He never required any more at any creature's hand since creation's birth, than that it should look up to its Creator for the continuance of that well-being which He hath made it to enjoy. To suppose that God requireth any more than to be trusted in is to suppose Him less than good, and ourselves greater than creatures. That goodness which created, is an everlasting goodness, ever streaming forth in the same gushing fulness, which at first wrought blessedness out of nothing, in order to preserve blessedness in being. The worthiness of any creature, therefore, consisteth in dependence upon its Creator, which is at once the expression of gratitude for its existence, and the acknowledgment of its Creator as the continuance of its existence. This was what Adam failed in, what Christ perfected. Christ's whole life was an act of dependence upon the Father, without whom He spake nothing, without whom He did nothing: and when He is glorying over the completion of His work, it is in these words, "Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me," (John xvii. 7, 8.) His will was tempted the other way, as ours is; but it resisted and overcame the temptation: He made himself nothing, He made his Father all. The deceived of these days are labouring to make Him everything, his Father nothing; and so to mingle the creature and the Creator, which it is the great wisdom of God to preserve separate, and in their proper relations one to another. Christ's worthiness came all from this, that He had glorified the Father; that he had manifested the Father's name, by living, moving, breathing, and having His being wholly in Him. It was the worthiness, not of self-righteousness, but of righteousness emanating from God. Now, when the Father sets Christ into His own throne, and possesses Him with the completeness of Godhead power, His own seven-fold Spirit of light and life, and sends fiery tongues from heaven upon men, to proclaim Him Lord of all, and with His own signet of signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost, attests their

word to be a word from heaven, He totally turneth over the reverence, homage, and dependence of the earth unto the hand of this Man, He glorifies Him with His own glory, He girds Him with His own girdle, He arms Him with His own sceptre, He exalts Him to His own dignity, He fills Him with His own Spirit. He either makes a creature God, or the creature to whom this is done is very God; is, and ever was, though as a creature apparent, God manifest in flesh. This great revolution being wrought, and this new authority being proclaimed abroad, all creature-worthiness standeth, in looking unto this man, the Christ of God, and He who doth thus depend upon Him, is worthy in the sight of God, in what way a creature is worthy, that is, not in, nor of itself, but as it looketh to the supreme Creator. Ah! what a wonderful, what a stupendously wonderful work of God is this bringing in of His Son to be the head of all creation, ever exhibiting Him as creature, and yet bringing it to pass that not the creature but the Creator shall be seen in Him; without resigning His rights as Creator, to make them manifest in a creature form. This is "the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." Our worthiness is therefore exactly of the same kind as Christ's, when we look continually to Christ, and are strengthened for good; as He looked continually to God, and was strengthened for good. God hath not changed His rule of approbation, His sense of worthiness. It is the same dependence upon the Creator which was required of Adam and the angels, yielded effectually by none but Christ, and by all others yielded only through Him, whether in the way of anticipation or of retrospection. He was to the angels a head of sustentation, and to us He is a head of redemption. God, in thus interposing a Mediator as the object of confidence, doth not withdraw Himself thereby, but shows Himself therein, while He teacheth all saved and redeemed creatures, that not without an incarnate God, a God in creature form, supporting creatures, are creatures brought into blessedness. Faith upon the fountain-head of its being is, and ever hath been, and ever must be, the worthiness of every creature. In being turned upon Christ, it is merely proved that Christ was the fountain-head of our being, the Alpha as well as the Omega, the first as well as the last, the beginning as well as the beginner of the creation of God, the first-born as well as the former of every creature. In one word, that God, having assumed the limited form of the Christ, having limited Himself within creature bounds, having done this in the person of His Son, did thereafter, and by this person thus circumscribed, create all things; and to this person of the Son of God as the Christ, all created things, with

Adam as their head, ought to have looked, and for not looking are brought low, and are fain to look again, ere ever they can be redeemed from their present sinful and miserable estate.—So much have I to say upon the nature of worthiness in the sight of God: it is faith in Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," (Col. i. 15–19.) If any one object to these forms of speech which I use concerning Christ, I answer, That they are those used by the Holy Ghost, and that they are the only ones which can satisfactorily establish His Godhead; that I am no minister of any book, so as to be bound to use its words, but of that book alone which is the Word of God, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," (Heb. iv. 12, 13.)

I do therefore most earnestly entreat as many as read these things, to consider whether they are worthy of that glory which is to be revealed no one knows how soon. Are you, my dear brethren, keeping your garments undefiled—your members servants of righteousness—your whole man holy in the sight of God? Are you standing for the faith, and striving after the attainment of perfect righteousness? Are you loving God because of His perfect holiness, and delighting in His law because it is perfectly holy? Is Christ precious to you because He came in your flesh, and under your conditions of trial, and therein perfected holiness? Why will not men believe this glorious truth? How will they feel when their Brother comes to judge them? He will tell them, that it was no impossible thing to serve God in human nature.

THE SPIRIT'S EXHORTATION AND PROMISE.

The language of these epistles is so rich, the matter in every sentence so weighty, and the current opinions in the Church feel to me so much out of harmony with the spirit which breathes throughout them, that, in my desire of exhibiting each several point of truth; I

seem sometimes in danger of losing sight of the beautiful symmetry of the whole, and the adjustment of the parts to one another, in the system of truth. There is, however, as we have often observed, a harmony of parts in this vision bespeaking the infinite wisdom from which it came forth. Each of the seven epistles holdeth up to view its own side of the truth, and presents it in a practical and embodied form, struggling with the co-relative form of falsehood in the midst of this dark and erroneous world. Among these, this Epistle to the Church of Sardis is intended to hold up the form and aspect of honour and dignity: wherefore so much of it is expressed in terms of the *robe* and the *name*. The chief Shepherd first presents Himself, with two titles of dignity, as the Possessor of all heavenly power, and the Head of all earthly supremacy; which He had attained by seeking the honour of God's name, and thinking nothing of His own. Then He challenges the Bishop of Sardis for his low and unworthy estimate of the true source of dignity, as if it lay in the tongues of men, directs him into the channel of true nobility, and, having complimented those of His flock who were drinking of the true fountain of honour, He here proposeth unto all the churches, and to every one who hath an ear to hear, the prize of heavenly honour and a glorious name;—the white robe being the outward aspect of glory, the name in the Book of Life, the intrinsical honour in the sight of God and of Christ. This high eminence of dignity and honour is presented to every one who overcometh all temptations, especially those of worldly honour and reputation, which stood in the way of the Church and angel of Sardis.

Now in the present day, there is certainly no temptation so great as to stand well with the voice of public opinion, to be well spoken of and applauded. And of all classes of men thus beset, none seems to be so sorely tempted as the angels of the churches, perhaps from their addressing popular audiences. The clergy of our Church, in particular, have been praised and applauded of a long time for their sobriety, piety, and pastoral faithfulness. The credit of a well-educated, well-principled, and well-behaved people, hath decidedly been given to them: for Scotland had every disadvantage when compared with other nations, and no advantage but her humble and unadorned Church. This hath not been lost sight of by the envious and evil men, who are desirous to upset the more costly and splendid and influential hierarchy of the Church of England; against whom to act with the more force, while they serve their own malice, they have continually brought forward the Church of Scotland as their covert. In these days of economy, also, when existing institutions are scanned with a severe and inquisitive eye, those of our

Church, for education and for the poor, have been found at once so wise and efficient as to draw great observation upon the clergy, from whom they emanate. These and other means acting upon the character of our nation, which is forward and daring, most reverend of dignities, and somewhat too much so of appearances, have brought it to pass, that, all retired from public observation, as the clergy of the Church of Scotland are, we have, as a body, no small consciousness of our good name; and when we come to act ostensibly, as in ecclesiastical courts, perhaps no judges in the island act so much under the impression of what will be thought of the decision out of doors. In the Church of England also, the same regard for appearances hath of late begun to show itself, and somewhat to reduce the proud and stately bearing which she used to carry towards the people; and this hath introduced many salutary outward reforms into the administration of her diocesans, as also into the character of her parish clergy. The hunting parson is almost hunted from the Church; as also are the drunkard and the openly profane; and, beyond question, her outward aspect is much improved within the last generation. It is very curious that, within the same period, a similar change should have taken place in the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland; which, from having the character of good-natured sensualists, hath, chiefly by political influence, taken that of smart, active, and ambitious churchmen. Nothing is able to resist the force of public opinion: it bears down everything but a thoroughly honest man. No institution, no office, not the king's nor the prime minister's, can stand upright and walk according to its proper rules and laws. It is a temptation of wonderful strength; and I know not whether it be not more powerful to prevent men from the way of righteousness, than the fire and fagot of Mary's reign in England, or the imprisonment and torture, the heading and hanging of Lauderdale and Mydleton's supremacy in Scotland. I feel, by the form and pressure of this temptation, how well worthy it is of a place in the seven trials of the Church. The gradual invasion of worldliness and decrease of love to Him who is no longer in the world, the tenfold persecutions of the Pagan empire, the flood of false doctors, canons, and councils, the establishment of the Papacy itself, with its perfect system of superstition,—these four successive trials of the Church, brought to view in the four preceding epistles, were none of them more severe to truth and godliness, than this form of public opinion; which, taking occasion from the right of private judgment, so nobly asserted at the Reformation, and finding vent through the art of printing, is now exercised daily, and weekly, and monthly, and yearly in such infinite ways,

and hath brought the bravest and the best of men into pusillanimous fear; is shaking thrones, and overturning dynasties, and oppressing personal liberty to an extent which I doubt if the Papacy ever surpassed. It is now pressing very closely upon the forms and institutions of the Church. In England, it is crying down the Church patrimony, with which it hath nothing to do, and venturing to feel its way towards the alteration of her symbolical books. In Scotland, it is crying down orthodox doctrine, and hurrying on the clergy to cast the maintainers of it out of the Church. At Geneva, it prevailed to shut the mouth of the pulpit, and interdict the liberty of preaching, upon five of the cardinal points of the Christian faith. God grant that the same spirit of compromising the truth may not come nearer to us than the state of Geneva. Measures of peace are fearful things when they are not governed by the love and knowledge of the truth. However it may end, the fact is certain, that the appeal to the people as to the voice of God is pressing us very hard, and a few men hardly sustain themselves against it. This is the temptation which is held out as the next to arise after the adulterous doctrines of Jezebel; and beyond question it is now in the world. It is the tare sown beside the truth in the Protestant Church; it hath grown up with Protestantism, and is now the only thing to be seen over the wide field. Few, very few, servants of Christ are there in the Reformed churches, compared with the servants of public opinion: few, very few, asserters of Christ's supremacy, compared with the asserters of the supremacy of the people. I have often my doubts whether amongst us the influence of public opinion be not as strong and as detrimental to the truth, as the influence of the Pope and his synagogue of Satan in Roman Catholic countries. This exact coincidence of the temptation of the Church of Sardis with that of the Reformed churches, convinces me the more that our view of the succession in the seven epistles is substantially true, though the catholic view be the great one, which the other doth but corroborate. Now as each soldier in an army, and each brigade, is expected to stand fast and meet the enemy who comes up against them; so we, having our several places and stations along the line of time, are expected to combat with that particular form of war which comes up against us: and there being no doubt that the force of popular opinion is our particular enemy in this day, to contend with and overcome this is our special calling, in the good occupation of which we shall do for our Captain the service required of us. Our fathers the Reformers did God's work in casting out Jezebel from the Church, and our kings in casting her out from

the land: they suffered her not any longer; they removed that offence of the chief Shepherd: they overcame her, and are entered into their reward. The Culdees before them both in Scotland and in England, and at the court of Charlemagne, and over all the bounds of Christendom, resisted the Balaamite and Nicolaitane doctors, who had come in like locusts, and eaten up both truth and purity in the Church. And now who are the chosen men in the Church to arise, and in the strength of Christ, to face and overcome the popular voice, which is now ruling all things with a rod of iron? This is the peculiar vocation, as soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called with; this is the particular form of battle which we have to wage, and those who overcome therein are promised the robe of everlasting glory and the name of everlasting renown.

This whole subject clears very much before my mind as I proceed; and I am made to feel the importance of that which I am called upon to put forth, even though it should be only for a testimony, and no eye of man should read, or heart of man should believe it. Let me, therefore, proceed in the fear of God, and do my work in His sight, who is ever walking among the seven golden candlesticks, and looking upon the seven stars which He holdeth in His right hand.

Concerning the influence of public opinion, or the temptation of a name to live, I would now discourse in a few words; and concerning the way of overcoming it. The principle of all private judgment is this, That while the word of authority is with the angel of the Church, the answer of approbation is with the body of the people; who being the members of Christ, put the word of prophesying to proof, trying it by its fruits, and holding fast that only which is good. No pride of office must be permitted to undervalue the right of private judgment and the response of the Spirit in the members of Christ. If there be a *jus divinum*, a Divine authority with the angel, there is the same with the people, of the Church; and these are not to stand up against, but to reverence one another. The Apostle John appeals to the unction which the people had received from the Holy Ghost, as the test of all truth; and writes to them not as to those "who know not the truth, but who know it." This right in the body of the Church, in every two or three of Christ's members, "to bind and to loose," "to ask what they will, and it should be done unto them," the Roman hierarchy took altogether away, usurping it unto themselves; the Reformers restored it again to the people. And from the abuse of this most precious boon, hath arisen that tyranny of the popular voice which now puts down

the dignity of personal freedom and responsibility as effectually as ever did the tyranny of the Romish priesthood. This abuse hath crept on from forgetting that those high privileges of the people arise not from themselves, but from the Holy Spirit dwelling in them as the members of the body of Christ; and stand not in the number or multitude of the people, but in each person giving forth the testimony of the Holy Ghost within him. As members of Christ, obedient to all Christ's ordinances, not as men living how they list; as individual persons whose will is set free from the bondage of the world and the flesh, and enlightened in the knowledge of the truth by the Holy Ghost, not as a mass of persons giving up their liberty to a common influence, and acting with one another through good and through bad report, it is that this most sacred privilege of private judgment is guaranteed to every man by the laws and constitutions of the Church, and even of nature itself. Now the angel of the Church, the king of the state, or any other office-bearer whatever, instead of being called upon to yield to the influence of popular opinion, however rightly exercised and fairly gathered, except in as far as it hath the response of the Spirit within his own conscience, is bound to set them all the example of an honest man and of a good Christian, by refusing to sacrifice the voice of God within him to any power or influence whatever. This is the very end of God in setting one man up in the sight of others, that through this man He may teach them in what way it becomes every man to act the part of a servant of the living God. He is the *person*, in the sight of all others, to fulfil the offices of a responsible person. And when the heads of the Churches, and of the kingdoms, do thus give to the people the example of godly and conscientious persons, and the people follow it in seeking for the answer of a good conscience within themselves, the result is harmony and unity, through the unity of that Holy Spirit which is within them. To yield to no foreign influence as an authority, while we weigh it as evidence—to respect the opinions of all men, while we reverence the voice of God in our own conscience, this is the part of an upright and godly person. Every man ought to have the witness within himself, or else he is no honest man, nor servant of the Most High God.

It is a mistake, therefore, to think that mere numbers give authority to any judgment or deliverance, so as to put it beyond question that the right is on that side; for the promise of infallibility is to two or three, not to two or three thousand. On the other hand, when great multitudes coalesce in one judgment, it is almost constantly found that they are following, not the voice of the Holy Ghost, whose followers are always a little flock despised of the

many, but their own ruling passion, or feeling of present interest and advantage. And this is, beyond doubt, the case, when that verdict or judgment of the many would trespass upon the rights of private persons, and especially when it would subvert the authority of office-bearers, in the Church or in the State; whose responsibility as men, and as men bearing trust, obligeth them to acquit their conscience to that Master unto whom they stand or fall; and to give an example of conscientious servants of the living God, to all the people over whom they have the oversight. For example, if I, the minister of a Church, were required by the unanimous voice of my flock to cease from preaching any of the truths of God, it would be my part to refuse such an unholy demand, and maintain that very truth more firmly than before. If again, I, as the angel of a Church, were required by my brethren in the pastoral charge of other flocks, to trespass against some of the positive commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ in matters of discipline, it would be my part to serve God rather than man, and bear the blame and the burden, whatever it might be, which they might impose. The misrepresentation of truth, the charge of schism, the loss of place and preferment, the odium and disgrace which follow upon such actings, are in God's sight of great price, and to be accounted subjects of great joy and rejoicing. But if I were to admit into my own bosom, any spirit of the like kind, by seeking to control the Holy Spirit's witness in the hearts of my people, and to require of them to take my word for His word; or if I were to propose in the councils of the elders any injunction of mine, or partial interpretation of Christ's injunction, and require them to sacrifice their judgments thereto, then were I found guilty in the sight of God. And what in cases of difference is to be done? Disagreement is to be made the subject of deep sorrow, and humble penitence before God, and diligent self-examination, to discover from what root of bitterness it hath sprung up: and peace and charity on both sides are to be carefully preserved, and the right of private judgment respected, until, by mutual forbearance, it please God to remove the infirmity and disease; which is generally by our outgrowing it, through the strengthening power of the Spirit of truth and love. But how shall the Holy Ghost ever grow to any maturity within our hearts, if we suffer another voice beside His to have a share in the council? Be that voice dear as a father's, be it revered as a pastor's, be it awful as a king's, be it terrible as the voice of an assembled multitude, be it impetuous and overpowering as the tide of public opinion, roaring through its thousand channels, we are meekly but manfully to resist it, come what will; and if we be overborne, to appeal our cause to the great assize, when every

secret work shall be called into judgment, and all disputes rectified by unerring justice.

These are the doctrines which will support a man against the masses of the enemy, and enable him to preserve his personal liberty against such fearful odds: and without the steady recognition of a witness within us, an infallible witness to truth, even Christ, it is a vain thing for a man to think of keeping his feet for one single hour. It is not public men, as heretofore, who are called in question by the people for their public acts, and rightly, seeing the people are constituted one integral part of the powers that be; but it is private persons, persons living in the utmost privacy, who are assailed and attacked on every hand, if in anything they dare to differ from the common opinion. The modesty of woman cannot shield her, the confidence of the most sacred friendship cannot preserve you, the sacred laws of hospitality cannot protect you, nor the laws of the state defend you, from being invaded and attacked upon all points where you think and act differently from the mass of men. It is really come to this, that if you will exercise any part of personal liberty in your house or your office, in your opinions or devotions, in any way whatsoever, you will be attacked for doing so. That is to say, if you will not serve God according to the rule of public opinion, you must be arraigned before the tribunal of public opinion. In other words, public opinion will oversway and overturn God in your conscience. You may serve God as much as you like, so that you offend not this or that party of men; but if you serve Him otherwise than they will authorise, then you must suffer for it by all the means of offence which they possess. It is a very easy matter to please them: you have only to dethrone God in your hearts, and enthrone them in His room. Well, who is for the Lord? Let that man prepare to suffer scandal and reproach, and all manner of evil which the law permits.

Of all the forms of this temptation, which it is our special calling to contend against and to overcome, that which is brought to bear upon us, by what is called the religious world, is by far the most formidable. The true principle of the Church, after baptizing every one into her communion, is to say, "Now go thy way and act the part of a free man of God; do, and be, no offence to the brethren; and the less I have to interfere in thine affairs the better." This is to reverence the dignity of a person, and righteously to fulfil the part of a mother who teaches her children to obey their father, and to hear his voice, not hers. But, now that a system of things is introduced instead of a system of persons, and called the Evangelical Body, or the Religious World, behold what they say: "Thou must

read books by rule, and adopt opinions by rule, and speak thy thoughts by rule; thou must eat and drink by rule, and marry by rule, and do everything else by our rules; or else be thou warned, that thou shalt have the lash of our newspaper and magazine upon thee: name and surname thou shalt stand blazoned, be thou man or woman, preacher or parish priest, in our columns, covered with our contempt, and stigmatised with the reproach of all who read our writing. The religious world must be warned against thee as an unruly person: thou must be brought under, and, if not, thine influence must be destroyed, and thy name cast out as evil." This is the truth: many helpless women have proved it, whose name to make public, is almost to break their peace for ever. Oh, it is a shameful, a shocking, a most sinful ostracism this, which is exercised against the liberty of a person to serve God with a free conscience. But it must be borne, and meekly borne, and contended against and overcome. Not courted, but not shunned; when it arriveth, it must be hailed as the righteous cross of Christ. And we must pray for the mockers and the crucifiers, "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I attribute all the knowledge of God and Christ, all the progress in the Divine life which I have made, and all the service which I have been able to do for the Church, in exposing her unlawful expediency and infidelity, and masses of heterodoxy, to this one cause under God; that I have now these twelve years, both as a private person and as an ecclesiastical office-bearer, resisted the external invasion of any, and every voice, which would intervene between my conscience and God. In doing which my temper hath oft been chafed, and the serenity of my mind beclouded, and my peace for a season disturbed, and my faith throughout hath been but as a grain of mustard-seed; but yet, through abounding and superabounding imperfections and transgressions, I have, by God's grace, been enabled to perceive His truth and to express it, and to awaken multitudes to think of their present state, and of the things which are about to come to pass. Every organ of public opinion in the land hath declared itself against me, and every vehicle of abuse hath been employed to pour contempt upon me; and be it known unto the timorous, for their encouragement, and to the weak, for their strengthening, that I stand at this hour more assured of the love and presence of my God with me in all my labours, than I have ever done before. I may take up the words of my Lord, and say, "The enemy hath not been able to exact upon me, nor the son of mischief to do me wrong." My greatest temptation by far is, to be stirred up with a spirit of contempt for their most ignoble and abject meanness:

from this may the Lord deliver me, and all who are in the like case. I put forth my own experience, as every one who knows the dignity of a person will, as Paul did, and Luther did, and He whom we are all called upon to follow, in order to confirm the doctrine which I have been laying down, and to encourage my brethren to go forward in their work and in their way, and not to be afraid of this intellectual supremacy, this Protestant inquisition, this rack of words and reproaches, which they are sure to encounter. Moreover I add, that if a man will think to attain to the knowledge of his God, or to righteousness, without setting public opinion at nought, he utterly deceives himself: and this, I deem, is of such importance that I will open it in a single paragraph.

Our Lord says, in a certain place, "How can ye believe who expect honour one of another, and expect not the honour which cometh from God only?" and in that word He expressed an everlasting truth, which perhaps never, since His own days, was so necessary of application as in these our times, when man's opinion is wont to be spoken of in all large assemblies and high places, as coincident with the voice of God; said, and not contradicted, for example, in the Houses of Parliament, and repeated in the thousand forms of persuasion throughout the land. The principle is, that where God may not reign alone, He will not come at all; that Christ will not be on any man's side, but every man must be upon His side: that the Holy Ghost alone is true, and every other spirit a liar; and that no man can entertain these Holy Ones, or profit by them in faith and holiness, save only inasmuch as he is totally delivered from other collateral influences. He must sit loose to all favourite opinions, if he would know the mind of God: he must sit loose to all private affections, if he would possess the love of God; and set at nought all consequences, if he would know the peace of God, which passeth understanding. To a heart thus open to and confiding in God, God will speak at all times, and by all means: such a one shall never be brought into error, nor shall he ever fall. This is not to break up all the bonds of life, but to put them under the government of their rightful Lord: it is not to give all our past results of experience to the wind, but to try them by the test of unerring truth: it is not to despise the brethren, but to make them come and sit at Christ's feet: it is not to contemn the Church, but to tell the Church, Thou also art a subject, and must be taught to obey. But, be the consequences of following the rule what they please, in the hands of headstrong and foolish men; the rule is peremptory and unchangeable, that if a man will think with a double mind, or love with a divided heart, or will look and make his obser-

vations with a double eye, his whole body shall remain full of darkness: and the darkness shall only increase by all his attempts to know God, under the condition of His agreeing with any men, or body of men, to serve God under condition of continuing to serve any man or body of men. But when, by clearing our conscience of all secret reservations, and our purpose of all bye-intents, we do find ourselves brought into collision with other men, and these, it may be, in authority or office over us, we are not to resist them when putting forth against us the powers with which they are invested; but to yield quiet submission, and, if need be, to die for the testimony of the truth. Such I believe to be the true doctrine with respect to public opinion, that special enemy whom we have to contend against and to overcome. And now hear what is the reward promised to him who overcometh.

The reward standeth in the two great attributes of honour, a robe of heavenly dignity, and a name of everlasting renown; but expressed in language the most rich and exuberant of meaning. Concerning the white raiment in which it is promised that those who overcome shall be arrayed, we have discoursed already. It is the emblem of that glory into which the faithful soldiers of Christ Jesus shall, at His coming, be translated. The cloud on which He comes seated is in colour white, (xiv. 4;) and the horse on which He rides (xix. 11;) and the throne on which He gives judgment, (xx. 11;) all emblematical of glorious purity. By declaring that He hath such raiment to give, Christ declareth Himself to be the possessor and distributor of that glory with which the saints shall hereafter be invested: wherefore also in all the doxologies, glory is ascribed unto Christ; "To Him be glory and dominion." God is the "Father of the glory," and bestowed it upon Christ, when He "raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory;" and to share in that glory we are called according to that word of the apostle, "that ye may know what is the hope of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Now what is the nature of the thing signified by this word glory, which is continually presented in the Scriptures, as the hope of the saints. It is a new form of creation different from that form which it weareth now, overrun as it is with sin and death, and also from that which it had at the first, outward as it then existed from God. The difference shall be derived from the union of Godhead with it in Christ, diffusing throughout every region the power of the seven Spirits of God, which shall not only raise it from its present death, but also inform it with eternal life, far beyond the reach of evil accident and change. The glory in it is the glory of

the manifest Godhead, wherefore the New Jerusalem is said to have the glory of God, and the nations of the earth do walk in its light; that is, in the beams of the Lord God Almighty, and of the Lamb, who are the light thereof. To accomplish this change upon creation, requireth the forth-putting of that seven-fold Spirit, with which Christ investeth Himself, to the angel and Church of Sardis, who were ambitious of honour and glory: for to raise Christ from the dead, and set Him in glory, required "the surpassing greatness of the power of the Father," "the energy of the might of His strength," (Eph. i. 19;) and to change our vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body, requireth the putting forth of "the energy whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." That the risen man should put forth this power, which is able not only to bring all creation up again out of its grave, but also to reconstruct it in a beauty and strength far surpassing its original form, doth, beyond all witness, prove that this same person was the Maker of it, and more than the Maker of it; its Redeemer, Sustainer, eternal Saviour and Glorifier. He is proved to be the Creator, inasmuch as, when its creature bands are all crumbled into dust, He doth raise it up again, bound together by the same laws, fulfilling God's original purpose, and so glorifying God its Maker: and He is proved to be more than its Creator, inasmuch as He sendeth through it a life over which death hath no power, a holiness which shall know no taint of sin, a beauty which shall never be marred again by the finger of corruption. This is more than creation, and more than creation redeemed; it is creation glorified; and He who out of the materials of dissolved dust, doth bring forth creation according to creation's laws, with the superinduced infallibility and glory of God's being impressed upon its face, doth gather unto Himself, not only the Divine attributes of the Creator of heaven and earth, but still higher attributes of God, even the complete glory of Godhead, which can in creature be expressed. Now, because in the reason of man there is no higher measure of Godhead than the bringing forth of all things out of nothing by the word of His power, and because in the Old Testament there is no higher attribute ascribed to God; I do, both from reason and Scripture conclude, that this person who is able to re-organise all creation, and bind it together with the indissoluble cement of holiness, and inform it throughout with the strength, and cover it all over with the beams of the glory of God, is greater than Creator, and not less than the eternal God. Now, because dignity and honour were much in the thoughts of the angel of this Church, and of his people, and they sought to occupy a high and noble place in the eyes of men, the Lord of glory doth present Himself

invested with all the power of God, and proffers to him and all his people, and to all the churches, and to the whole audience of the children of men, the fellowship of that supereminent dignity into which He had been raised, by the putting forth of the utmost power of God: as much as to say, "Why dream ye of earthly honours, which perisheth in the using, and is the food of worms, and shall be consumed in the fire of the holiness of God, which shall go before the face of my glory? Stand up from grovelling thus in the dust of the ground; cast the eye of your ambition upward, and behold the resplendent glory of the New Jerusalem, the dwelling-place of God: set your affections upon these things in the heavens, and despise this world reserved for destruction. Fight against the temptation of earthly state and splendour. Defile not your touch with these riches of Sodom, O ye sons of faithful Abraham, to whom I the great Melchizedek have brought forth bread and wine, the pledges of the inheritance of glory, and of that holy body in which you are to enter in through the gates of the city. O pledged Christians, O betrothed bride of Christ, how ill it beseems thee to take thyself up with these earthly things, whose proper dwelling-place and habitation is prepared in the heavens!"

The second part of the Spirit's promise by the mouth of our glorified Head is expressed in these words: "And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels." This is twofold; negative, what He will not do; and positive, what He will do for the valiant and victorious. Let us examine them in order. The book of life, in which the names of the Church militant are enrolled, and out of which those who draw back shall be erased, is entitled (chap. xiii. 8,) "the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And the names inscribed in it are said (chap. xvii. 8) "to have been written there from the foundation of the world:" and one effect of being therein entered, is to preserve us at the day of judgment from the lake of fire, the just desert of our sins; for it is revealed, (chap. xx. 15,) "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire;" which "is the second death." Of this life the seat and habitation is declared to be the New Jerusalem; of which it is said, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," (xxi. 27.) This life of the New Jerusalem is purchased by the death of the Lamb, slain in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world. These heavenly things are

sanctified by better sacrifices than bulls or goats, even by the blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, (Heb. ix. 23.) And this is the reason for which it is called the "book of life of the Lamb slain," because the life, unto the inheritance of which it conveys the title, was by His death purchased; not that life conferred by creation on Adam, nor the mortal life into which we are begotten by generation, but that eternal life, to give which unto the world, Christ, the Bread of Life, came down from heaven; the life which is not otherwise to be had than by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, (John vi.;) the eternal life of which John speaks, both in the beginning of his Gospel and First Epistle, as having been with the Father, and which Christ takes to Himself, as one of His names, "I am the Life." The glorious form of that life is not yet manifested; but "is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

Concerning the origin of the term "*book* of life," I have been able to discover nothing specific in sacred or profane history; and therefore suppose that it is taken from the common, and we may say universal, custom of all kings, to take from time to time a census of the living persons in their dominions, and enrol them in a book. The Jews were very careful to preserve such registers in every family; and the Book of Genesis is full of such lists, showing us that the custom was coeval with mankind. When the children of Israel had offended God so grievously, by the idolatry of the golden calf, Moses interceded in these words: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin;—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which thou hast written," (Exod. xxxii. 32.) To which God answered, "Whosoever hath sinned, him will I blot out of my book." It is hard to say what book Moses here referreth to; a book written by God, in which his own name was entered, and out of which God would blot none but the wicked. There hath been no book mentioned as yet in the Holy Scriptures, save that book (xxiv. 7) in which were written the words of God's covenant with the people, to give them the inheritance of Canaan. In this book Moses had a place, as well as all the rest of the children of Israel: for they were all parties, and as such sprinkled with the blood of consecration. Sometimes I have thought that among the originals showed to him in the Mount,—the heavenly things, of which the earthly things he framed were only patterns,—one might be a book, the book of life, the book of the new covenant for the inheritance of the heavenly Jerusalem; the book sprinkled not with blood of bulls and of goats, but with the blood of the Lamb

slain from the foundation of the world. This expression "from the foundation of the world," twice applied to it, requires that it should have been then in existence; and being one of the heavenly things, it may have been made known to him as the true form of the eternal covenant: after which he should cause a book of his typical covenant to be written, the original according to the pattern of which the children of Israel should be required tribe by tribe, and family by family, to write up their genealogies, for the inheritance of the land of promise, when they should arrive there. Certain it is, that from this place forward, throughout the Scriptures, allusion is made to this book of God, and once or twice under the name "book of the living." In the 40th Psalm, Christ speaks of His body as being written of therein; and in the 139th, of His members, which I take to be the Church. In Isaiah iv. 3, the holy remnant who shall inhabit Zion and Jerusalem, are said to be "written among the living [*marg.* to life] in Jerusalem;" and Daniel useth similar language of all the holy people,—"Thy people shall be delivered, every one that is found written in the book."

Besides the expressions, "book of life," "the book of God," "the book," there are others which indicate books for particular ends or objects; as, for example, "the book of judgment," wherein are written the actions of every man who hath lived (Dan. vii. 10; Rev. xx. 12): "A book of remembrance written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name," (Mal. iii.) Laying all these things together, it seems to me as if God would represent by these expressions the various departments of His government of the world, after the similitude of earthly kings, who have books for various ends: one for the laws of the kingdom, (Esth. i. 19,) another for its chronicles, (Esth. vi. 1,) another for its daily occurrences, another for persons, according to their various stations and offices, merit or demerit, &c. Of these books of God, containing the several parts of His administration, the book of life grows out of His purpose to sacrifice His own Son. It was not for nothing that He made so great and precious a sacrifice: many souls were thereby to be brought into glory: by the righteousness of this one man, were many to reign in life. From that death many lives should come; a city of life, the central life of the world, from which, as from the heart, the whole creation should be supplied with the vital stream. As the Church in all times, places, and persons subsisting, is only the members of one body, whereof Christ is the quickening Spirit, so when the New Jerusalem shall be revealed, I judge that it shall be the source of light and life to the populous universe. What office the sun in the firmament doth now fulfil for this productive

earth, being the source of vegetable life, without which all were dark, dead, and desolate as the frozen pole; that office will the New Jerusalem, the globe of spiritual life, fulfil for all creation raised again from the corruption of the tomb. From this, the form of spiritual being, shall the world drink its spiritual blessedness, there see the origin of its spiritual life, and thither trace up the variety of spiritual operations. At present the spiritual is not manifested, though we know it to be the fountain-head and feeding spring of all corporeal energy. Then it shall be manifested in the New Jerusalem, of whose life, glory, and infinite goodness, the single origin shall be seen in the sacrificed body of the Lamb. As the river of life which followed Israel through the wilderness, and sustained that numerous camp for forty years, flowed all from the rent side of a flinty barren rock; so shall the full river which floweth out of the city of God, and watereth every corner of the renewed creation, be known and seen to rise in the humble fountain of the sacrificed Lamb. Death, which threatened creation, is thus made to yield forth the material, and the life, of creation's eternal blessedness. So that the distinction of being enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, I conceive to stand not merely in our being saved from the penalty of the second death, but chiefly in our being raised to be the bride of the Lamb, who hath life in Himself, to be the spiritual living body of that spiritual living Head; and to be looked up to with Him as the parents of that new and everlasting life with which all creation shall be filled in the ages to come.

Now this dignity, the highest in the world that ever shall be, is no man's right, would not have been Adam's right though he had never fallen; nor is it claimed by the Son of man as His by right, but besought from the Father, in consideration of His having glorified Him on the earth, and to the end He might glorify Him for ever. "Glorify thou me, with that glory which I had with thee before the world was." "It PLEASED the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell." Least of all, being an honour and an office of so wondrous a height, can it be the desert in any way of poor wretched sinners, whose proper desert is the deepest pit of hell? And though Christ's death hath made it a just thing in God to justify the believer; yet is there even in that death, all precious as it is, nothing whatever beyond the purgation of the sin of the world: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Whence, then, doth the admission of any one into the New Jerusalem, and the registry in the book of life for that glory proceed, but from the Divine attribute of grace which would show itself forth in eternal alliance with that Divine glory, which the New

Jerusalem will for ever hold up in the sight of the world? Grace, must be its floor, if glory be its superstructure; mercy its pedestal if the Shechinah presence, and cherubic powers of God be its form. It is the free-will and sovereign grace of God which moveth Him to take men, and not angels; and of men to take the fallen, and not the unfallen, for that pre-eminency over creation. And in the same purpose of His will, in which He proposeth to bring Christ in as the Head and soul of that celestial body, doth He propose to bring sinners of mankind in as the members thereof. This eternal purpose or decree of God is that which constitutes a book of life of the Lamb slain; and a New Jerusalem composed of sinners glorified. It is not till after much consideration, that I have come to be convinced that inscription in the book of life is one and the same mystery with election. I long doubted, by reason of the threat of blotting out so constantly connected with this book; but a thorough consideration of the matter hath satisfied me that this arose from a false way of considering election, which the right study of this symbol of a book may serve among other good purposes to correct. These are the reasons for which I believe the inscription in this book to be one with election in Christ Jesus:—First, Because both are from the foundation of the world: the election indeed is declared to be before creation, (Eph. i. 4;) but so is the slaying of the Lamb, (1 Pet. i. 20.) There may, however, be a distinction in this: if there be, I have not been able as yet to perceive it. Secondly, Not to be blotted out of the book of life, that is, to remain inscribed in it, secures for us the end of election, which is to be one with Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem. Thirdly, Twice over in the Revelations (xiii. 8, xvii. 8) is the entry in the book of life held up as the only protection from universal apostasy. Everything fails but this; all save those therein entered fall away. Now this is exactly what in another place (Matt. xxiv. 24) is said of "the elect." Fourthly, The elect, when the end of their ordination is mentioned, are said "to be ordained to eternal life," (Acts xiii. 48.) Finally, The New Jerusalem, to which registry in the book of life is the passport, is the number of the elect accomplished, being in truth the honour to which they are raised, the election manifested; the heavenly calling, the holy calling, the hope of our calling, so often and so variously spoken of in the Holy Scriptures; the inheritance, the reward, the glory, and the consummate blessedness. These things, if the elect attain unto, it must be through a previous entry in the book of life; for no one who is not entered therein obtains admission into the city, and all the rest are cast into the lake of fire, (Rev. xx. 15.) Holding, therefore, that enrolment in

the Lamb's book of life is the figurative way of expressing the decree of election: we are now, by the help of grace, from the way in which the figure is used, to find out the way in which the idea ought to be handled as an essential doctrine of the Christian Church.

As this book, for all the honour, security, and glory connected with enrolment therein, is continually represented as in God's hand to raze out of it whom He pleaseth; and as Christ doth threaten that He will do this in certain conditions, and in certain others will not, it seemeth to us a clear point, that the elect should be in likewise spoken to, and spoken of, as indeed they are in these words: "Work out your election with fear and trembling:" "Make your calling and election sure." For the practical conscience of man, to which God always addresseth himself, it is necessary to believe, and hold fast both sides of the truth: the one, that our establishment in Christ Jesus is sure and steadfast as the purpose of God, and not to be shaken by any accidents, occurrences, or conditions of this changeable estate; the other, that God may at any time, for causes which He seeth to be good, remove us from that foundation. The one is necessary, in order to give us some ground of confidence which cannot be shaken; the other is necessary, to make that a moral and not a physical ground,—the basis of a spiritual system of obligation, and not of a mechanical system of fatalism. To take me into the number of His chosen ones is of God's free grace, and to keep me there, is always of the same free grace. To suppose otherwise were to suppose God not to be free, which were to disqualify Him from being the Governor of the world; to behave otherwise, were to overthrow the very basis of morality and responsibility. While, therefore, we rest upon the constancy of God's will as the ground of our preservation, we rest upon the same constancy of His will as the ground of our holiness. Once knowing what this will is, that it is an undeviating goodness, we feel that, in order to stand with it, we must cleave to goodness; and, in cleaving to goodness, we feel that we have the Eternal on our side, and His arms around us. When election is looked upon as an act in time, it becomes most destructive to the soul; when it is a continual expression of the sovereign and unchangeable will of God, which we must acknowledge and bow to and obey, and, by obedience, abide in, it is the life of the soul, and its security, and its stability. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." God is sovereign always: if the sight of His sovereignty comforted you once, it should comfort you always. You should not, as it were,

wish to have Him committed to you, but always free to deal with you according to His unchanging and unchangeable mind. By knowing that His will is to love, to be pitiful and gracious, and, in one word, by seeing His will working in the word and life of Christ Jesus, we fall in with it, and are obsequious to it, and delight to depend upon it always for our salvation, and we desire no securities, but the security of holiness, which is conformity to His will.

The next thing to be gathered from this figure of election is, the pre-requisite to or ground of election. Seeing that every name is written in the book of life before the beginning of the world, it cannot be for any worthiness in one man more than another; but for some cause which is wholly anterior and exterior to ourselves, like the cause of our creation. That cause is contained in the name, "The book of the life *of the Lamb slain.*" It is in the fore-view of the Lamb slain, that such a book exists at all; and He is foreseen as slain for the sake of sin, to be taken away by His death, and of life from the dead to be brought in by His righteousness. Such a book, therefore, exists wholly in virtue of Christ's death; which is the procuring cause of all the benefits flowing either from the enrolment or the permanent abiding therein. Election is a consequence of redemption, made possible only through the previous purpose of redemption. The eternal inheritance cannot be attained until the transgressions done against a holy God be entirely taken out of the way. And Christ, by accomplishing this as the Lamb slain, becomes the Mediator of the New Testament, the giver of that inheritance, the master and sole proprietor of that book. The law, or book of the covenant, the inheritance of Canaan, Jesus of the seed of Abraham, and made under the law, with the whole Levitical system, are, as it were, dramatic persons and things; by the right exhibition of which God doth teach the universal principles of creation, bondage, and redemption. In this dramatic mystery, the law standeth for the perfect righteousness which God requires at the creature's hand; Canaan, for the eternal inheritance of the New Jerusalem, with its dependent creation, Jesus, under the law, to bear the transgressions of the whole Jewish nation, representeth the Lamb slain, before the foundation of the world, to bear the sins of a creation foreseen as about to fall into sin, through Him to be redeemed, and brought into the condition of eternal glory. And this is certainly the use made of the whole Levitical ordinance, in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews, from which we extract the following words, as containing the great truth we are now in quest of; namely, that election is in consequence, and not in precedence, of redemption:—

"And for this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that

by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Be it acknowledged then, that there could be no eternal inheritance otherwise than through a redemption for a fallen world; no book of life otherwise than through a Lamb slain; no election otherwise than through a previous reconciliation.

But besides this work of Christ in the salvation of any, and of every one, who enters by the gates into the city of the New Jerusalem, there is a work also of the Father; who, as He originates the work of Christ, in giving Him for the whole world, doth likewise originate the work of applying the benefits of His death to every person who shall eventually come into the eternal inheritance. This continues the act of giving the Son; and from being an act done once for all, doth make it to be an act ever doing, as are all the acts of God. In giving His Son, God takes the attitude of a reconciled and reconciling Father, and that attitude He preserves for ever and ever, in the sight of all creation, who in looking for ever upon the Son as the Lamb slain, do in that look ever behold God as the Father who gave Him. These two things are inseparable, the acknowledgment of Christ as the Son of God, and the acknowledgment of God as the Father of Christ: the acknowledgment of Christ as the Lamb slain to take away sin from the world, and of God as the Father who of His mere grace gave Him for that most merciful end. Forasmuch, then, as it is necessary, in looking at the New Jerusalem, containing the complement of those who are blessed with eternal life, to have respect not only unto the Lamb, who purchased it for all, but also to the Father, who gave the Lamb, and who giveth persons to the Lamb, ("Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me,") we must have in every promise, deed, or document, which concerneth that city, the prerogative of both these Divine parties, distinctly yet harmoniously represented. And this is done by the name "Lamb's book of life." Inasmuch as it is a book it is proper to the Father, whose is the purpose, the written recorded purpose: inasmuch as it is the Lamb's, the lives of all entered in it were purchased with His blood, and are given to Him for an inheritance by the Father. "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." The Father hereby asserts His right to creation as God who created it, and to every sinful creature as His to punish with eternal death, or freely to forgive and bring into eternal glory. Every advantage which we have, above the corruption of death, or which we hope to have hereafter above hell-fire, He will have us to acknowledge to His own free grace, and not to our own deserving, and if we refer it

to Christ, it must be to Christ as the expression of His love. God the Father will be acknowledged as the principal; His free will, His self-originated grace, as the only cause of every good thing which we enjoy, or hope to attain to: and because "the life" of the New Jerusalem is the best and highest of all things, He will have His hand therein to be above all measure acknowledged; and of such acknowledgment Christ is Himself the brightest example, both as respecteth Himself personally, and as respecteth all His people. As respecteth Himself, when He hath finished His work, He meekly asks from God, to be raised from the dead, and to be re-instated in the glory which He had before He took this low descent into our miserable estate. And throughout all the Psalms He rejoiceth mightily in this, that God did not leave His soul in hell, nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption; but showed Him the ways of life, and made Him glad with the joys and pleasures which are at His right hand for evermore. And every one that is given to Him out of the prison-house of sin and death, He most thankfully acknowledgeth to the Father, and ofttimes declareth that for them specially He gave Himself to die. Not that, in such expressions, "I give my life for the sheep," "I lay down my life for my friends," "I pray for them, I pray not for the world," He gainsays His other expressions of universal love, "I am come that the world through me might have life," "and the bread is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world," "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee! . . . but ye would not;" but that, in these exclusive forms of speech, He introduceth another idea, besides that of universal love contained in the other; which is the idea of the Father's right to be acknowledged both by Him the Shepherd, and by every one of the sheep, as the originator of their deliverance out of darkness into light, of their being given to the Son, of their being preserved in Him, and of every benefit of Godhead, which through Him they do enjoy. These two ideas of the universal benefit, and the way of its becoming personal through the acknowledgment of the Father, are beautifully wrought up together in one discourse, both in the 6th and the 17th chapters of John.

But the acknowledgment of the Father as the originator and continuer of every blessing in Christ contained, and through Christ received, is no reason for limitation or circumscription of that benefit to a few, which in itself is designed and fitted and effectual for all. God hath, in giving Christ for all, testified the very contrary of a limited or circumscribed love; of an unwillingness or unreadiness to save all: and I consider it little short of blasphemy, to say that there is in Him any unwillingness or slowness to forgive and accept

and favour all mankind. There is no radical difference between the God seen in election and the God seen in redemption. He is the one living and true God, who, see Him as you may, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. What, then, occasions the circumscription and limitation? The rebellious will of man, which either will not acknowledge God as the Lord, depend upon Him for life and breath and being; and, if it acknowledge Christ, will grasp Him as its own, and make its own use of Him, without seeing its own sinfulness and wretchedness in the need of such a gift, and God's grace and goodness in the giving of it; or, if it acknowledge this, doth acknowledge it only once for all, or if continually, in words only, but spurneth the doctrine of election, which secures for God the Father the continual homage of the will wherein is the power of a spirit; for all which we receive. As man's wickedness, therefore, made redemption necessary, so man's wilfulness to be rebellious still, though living ensphered with the blessings of redemption, is what preventeth the common redemption from becoming universal, and rendereth election necessary in order to bring any one, and every one, to Jerusalem, the throne of glory. Now, as God, foreseeing that all flesh would sin, did purpose that His eternal Son should come in flesh, and be the Lamb slain to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; so, foreseeing that man's rebellious will would not be melted by that manifestation of His love, but rise up against the Lordship of His Christ, He did, in the foreknowledge of this, purpose to give unto Christ for His reward, and for His use, a certain portion of the grace-despising and love-rejecting world, in whom He would show forth the power and efficacy of that God and Saviour whom all the rest should reject and cast out, as also His own power to reclaim and restore and glorify that which His hand had originally created. Thus is election the mystery of the Father's will, as redemption is the manifestation of the Father's love; the former affecting us as persons, the latter affecting us as a community. And because election is addressed to the will, which is a man's personality, its form must necessarily be partial and particular, otherwise it would be altogether unable to produce any effect upon the will of a person. For, be it observed, of the truth of election, as of all truth, that it works its effect upon a responsible person by a certain adaptation to his being, and not by a brute or physical force. And, being intended to work submission in our will to God's will, it must in its form be particular and personal; representing the power as well as the willingness of God, to reduce our will into obedience to His own, and, through the obedient will, bringing the whole man into the obedience of Christ. But truth, because it is

presented to man considered as a person, is not limited on that account, because man is by his spirit personal, as by his flesh he is common. It becomes limited only by our resistance and rejection of it. And, therefore, I think the doctrine of election to be erroneously stated when it is represented as an exclusive doctrine, and not a doctrine for the edification and conversion of all men; which all men are as blameworthy in rejecting, as in rejecting the doctrine of God's love, whereof election is the form proper to an individual. When I discover my wickedness in rejecting Christ, the common sacrifice for my sins and the sins of all the world, I would be in utter despair did the doctrine of individuality not come in and tell me, "Be of good courage, for God dealeth with men personally, in order to work them into a mind and heart and will for receiving Christ: and this He will do for thee and for any man; and hath done for every man who ever came to Christ." This news is as life from the dead to the poor self-condemned soul, driven to its wit's end by its own obstinate wickedness.

Now of all ways which could be taken for representing this personal work of God the Father upon single persons, and setting forth its vital necessity at all times, towards our attaining unto eternal life, no method that could have been devised is so effectual, as that of fixing upon our names, which distinguish us from one another, and entering them in a book, each with his proper account and remarks, keeping a continual oversight over us, to see how our account standeth, and holding it up as the ground of all stability to keep our place there, of all safety to stand well there, and of eternal salvation to be found there at the last. And this I believe to be the principal reason why the symbol is chosen, and combined into one with the Lamb, in order to combine the two great principles of personality and community; which union, as it is the constituent principle of the Godhead, is also the constituent principle of all truth of manhood, made in the image and likeness of God. This book being given into the hands of the Lamb to keep, doth signify that He is not only the unsealer of the book for entering names therein, but that He is also the keeper of the account of every one who is there entered. Or, in other words, He that is the Redeemer of all, is the Head of the Church; He that is the Saviour of all, is specially so of those that believe: that all judgment is given to Him, and all safe keeping; and everything which concerneth the persons of His people, as well as the commonness of their nature. In flesh, He was the Redeemer of all flesh, because flesh is the element of our community: in spirit, He is the Saviour of persons, because in the element of spirit standeth our personality. But if we were to follow this tract further we would pass into regions which are beyond the

scope of the practical lecturer, and therefore we will conclude this negative part of the blessing by a word or two concerning the way by which we come to know, and ought to preserve, our standing in this book of life.

To know that we are written in this book, is to know that Christ hath died for our sins; to know that God hath elected us unto everlasting life, is to know that He willeth our salvation, and hath given His Son to procure it: and to persevere in this knowledge, is to make our calling and election sure, and to retain our place unto the end in this book of God. To know that the Lamb was given of God to be slain for us, is to know that our name is written in that book; and knowing this, to fall away from the love of God and of Christ, and from the way of holiness, is to cause our names to be blotted out. *We* cause it not to be entered; God's grace and Christ's work cause it to be entered; but we cause it to be erased when we deny the Lord that bought us, crucify the Son of God afresh, count the blood of the covenant with which we were sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace. No one hath any right to have his name entered therein; God of grace purposeth to save, and Christ of His grace proposeth Himself as the Mediator through whom God may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. This grace of God is to all men: this work of Christ is for all men. It becomes mine in particular by having the faith of it wrought in my proud rebellious mind, and the love of the Doers of it shed abroad in my hard and stony heart. This done, I am an elect person, and ever done I shall never fall away; because He who hath begun this good work in me will carry it on unto the end. But His carrying of it on is by the same means, and with the same effects, as His beginning of it; and I for my part know only this, that I love God and Christ as I did at first, and serve them and depend upon them, and in every way feel towards them as I did at first. I am supported by them continually, and in the strength they give prevail mightily against all mine enemies. I see no other security but the security of their sameness yesterday, today, and for ever. I look at them and not at myself. In their light I see light, and in their life I enjoy life. If I were ever to cease to depend upon the love of that God who gave His Son, upon the redeeming love of that Son who buried Himself in the mortality of my nature, and made it all quick with everlasting life, I would lose my hold and standing, and sink away into the deepest limbo of apostasy. I feel that the love which wrote my name there is the only thing which cannot change or be broken; it held on towards me through all my backslidings and total death in sin. God's creature, I knew Him not, set Him at naught, trampled upon His

laws, despised His Son, and was living in open rebellion; yet His love clave to me. I wearied all men, all men forsook me. I was hateful to myself, and ready to abandon all hope and to be swallowed up in atheism; but He loved me, and made me to know His love, and taught me that He had written my name in the Lamb's book of life. This is the last, the greatest act of constancy which my sin, which perseverance in sin, could not divide from me. When I come to know this, I have a security above all securities; and I say to myself, I shall surely never fail, for I am written in the book of life, God's love was not alienated from me, but continued fixed upon me, and wrote me there. How should it ever fail me? If unworthiness, if sin could have divided me from His love, I should never have been called with this holy calling, or brought to know this precious truth, that my name was written in heaven.

To be enrolled in the book of life is therefore to be acknowledged as the highest and most perfect grace which God can bestow upon a creature, being no less than the complete fellowship of that estate and dignity which He hath appointed for His own eternal Son, the well-beloved and only-begotten of the Father. And as our admission thereunto is not for any merit of our own, but in spite of our utmost demerit, arising purely out of that purpose of His will which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began, so our continuance therein must ever be referred to the stedfastness of that unbiassed will which placed us there;—insomuch that if any man should feel that he needeth other securities than the will of God, ever free to do what seemeth to him good,—if he should feel desirous to bind God for the future by something which he hath done in the past; if, to return to the plain language of the text, he would wish to take away from God the liberty of blotting out of that book whom it pleaseth Him to blot out; in harbouring such a wish, or feeling, or thought, he doth declare himself to have most insufficient and dishonourable ideas of God, and to be still in the state of one who knows not God's electing love, and hath no faith in his own personal election. God, to be truly appreciated and honoured, must be depended on for Himself, and loved in His freedom. We must not wish to have Him pledged to us by any other bonds than His own unchangeable being. We must honour the awfulness of His will, and feel in perfect security, though He be in perfect liberty at any time and at all times to blot us out of His book. His will is the only security and stability of the world; and because it is free, and not acted upon by any thing without or beside itself, I can confide in it. The reason why it is the only safety to be written in that book is this; because God, and Christ who is one with God, alone have to do with the entries and erasures thereof.

It hath oft occurred to me, in writing these things upon the book of life, and upon election, which is the common-place in theology answering thereto, that those who profess to believe in election, the High Calvinists as they are called, are in truth further from the feeling and power of that blessed truth than many who in words deny it, but in heart and life act under its holy influence. The reason is, that this and every other orthodox truth in our reformation divinity have passed over from being ideas for the responsible will, to become mere conceptions for the abstract understanding; instead of being moral truths, to become mere mechanical and numerical truths, holding not of the reason, but of the faculty which judgeth by the sense. Thus systematical Calvinists cannot bear the idea that God should have the power of blotting out a name from the book of life: they think it dishonourable to his stedfastness and unchangeableness that it should be so: they stand up for His liberty before the foundation of the world to take whom He pleased; after that they would give him no liberty, but bind him fast. To them I would say, as Paul doth to the Galatians, "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" You err by bringing that noble idea of God's free and sovereign will under the conditions of time. Keep it always so free; assert for him free and sovereign will as His unchangeable attribute, and you present to the will of man the firm and fixed centre round which to revolve. Do otherwise, and you make God the creature of fate, and your religion becomes a system of fatalism. That man acknowledgeth a will in God who will at any time say, "I may not act thus, lest He should blot me out of His book." That man believes in election who says, "I may not do this, because God hath chosen me to eternal life, and it is contrary to that will of His which is my only hope and security of salvation." If I set light by that will, what have I to trust in? I can only feel what a great strength there is in God's will according as I stand under it. His will is my confidence of standing, and it is my terror of falling. Would a wife treat her husband nobly if she were to say within herself, "Ah, now my husband must love me, for I have got marriage-lines?" Would she be expressing either a noble feeling, in herself, or addressing a noble feeling in him? She confesseth uncertainty and doubt of her own standing in his love, and implieth that his affection to her is not such as she can depend upon for its own strength and steadfastness. In truth, she both dishonours him and herself as free persons, and honours a thing, an outward action past and done, instead of a will continually willing to love. So it is with a person, who, from a present God free to love, free to adopt, and free to cast off according to His own mind, begins to think of a God who hath passed

such and such an act before the foundation of the world, or entered into such and such a contract and covenant in time: not but that God doth make contracts and covenants, and keepeth by them; but this He doeth for the end of showing to us the constancy of that will, and the holiness of it—in one word, the nature and form of it, that from the covenant we may rise to the Covenant Head, from the creature to the Creator, from the decree of election to the gracious and loving God, who made choice of one so unworthy, and depend upon Him to love us still notwithstanding our unworthiness. Much more could we say upon this matter, were we at liberty to use it otherwise than as one topic in the great subject of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church.

It appears, therefore, that not only the redemption, but the election also, is under the administration of our blessed Saviour and Elder Brother. The Father hath given into His hand the book of those whom He hath written for life, and leaves it with Him to blot out whom it pleaseth Him; thereby teaching the elect to know that their election cometh to them from Christ as well as from the Father,—Christ, the procuring cause of it to any; the Father, the chooser of those to whom it shall be given; and Christ, the effecter of the purpose, by preparing the unworthy outcasts for redemption into the high and holy presence. If the Father be free to inscribe or to blot out, so is Christ: as the Father is, so is Christ. "Hitherto the Father worketh and I work;" "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, that men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father." Christ is not the mere book-keeper; He is the book-owner, and the subject-matter of the book; for the Spirit of the eternal God is in Him, even the seven Spirits of God: they are in Him for judgment as well as for power; not only as the seven horns but the seven eyes of God which run to and fro over the earth. The Father's will is in Him. The Father giveth to Him the election, and saith, "Keep them by my name;" and Christ keepeth them by teaching them the name of the Father, which is His unchangeable being, and this He doeth by showing them Himself. In the human will of Christ, a free will and a perfectly good will, the will of man reads and understands the free and perfectly good will of God. God's absolute and incomprehensible will ever expresseth itself in form of THE WORD, which, apprehended of reason, becometh knowledge of God and a rule unto our will; which thereby discovereth its own obliquity, and feeleth its own bondage, and desireth the strengthening of the Supreme will, and receiveth it by the Spirit, and so working outward, brings the members of the body and mind into conformity with the will of God, expressed in *The Word*. Christ, therefore, is to the creature

the ALL IN ALL of God, in whom God is seen and known, and through whom God is approached unto, and worshipped, and depended on: and therefore it is that in His hands the book of life resteth, to retain whom it pleaseth Him to retain, and whom it pleaseth Him to reject.

In the exercise of this Supreme Administration over those who shall be heirs of salvation, Christ, the Head of the Church, gives us to know, that He will not blot out of the book of life any one who overcometh, but will confess His name before His Father and before His holy angels. Upon this word we are required by God to rely, and to go forward in the warfare with the devil, the world, and the flesh; to stand steadfastly, and to fight boldly, as we would not be cast away; as we would continue in the love and favour of Christ, and at the end be presented in the presence of His Father and His holy angels, and be confessed to by Christ as one of those whom He hath found worthy to inherit all things. The language of the last clause of this blessed promise is taken from the charge or commission, which our Lord gave to the twelve apostles, when He sent them forth to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, (Matt. x. 32, 33): "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." The corresponding passage in Luke (chap. xii. 9) hath it, "confess before the angels of God;" and both are joined together in the words of the promise before us. In both these passages this blessing is set over against the fear of man, to preserve us from denying His name in the august presence of kings, and rulers, and potentates of the earth, by assuring us, that all such earthly vicegerents have no power, but as it is given them from above "from your Father," who numbereth the hairs of our head, and hath a watchful oversight of the sparrows which fly in the midst of heaven. To neutralise the fear of man, who can only kill the body, he setteth before his followers the fearfulness of God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell fire for ever. And to comfort them under the persecutions and castings out by father and mother and brother and sister, and all the world, He assureth them, that their dishonoured and rejected names He will confess before His Father which is in heaven, and before the holy angels of God. This throws great light upon the temptation of the Church of Sardis, and brings no small confirmation to the view thereof, which we have entertained and held forth in this lecture; showing that it is the temptation of a name with men, and the fear of reproach, which did most withstand their faithful testimony; and so I feel it to be in this day.

There is certainly a league, amongst all respectable and reputable

men, to cast out the name of God and of Christ, and to substitute in their stead a conventional religion, which shall embrace all that is decent and decorous, moderate and praiseworthy, among men. All that is rational and moral in philosophy, all that is liberal and enlightened in politics; which presents Christ as the great Teacher and Exemplar of the system, God as the great Overseer and Protector of it, and man as its responsible observer and doer. Redemption and regeneration, the new man and the old man, are but the technicalities of the system; and the Holy Spirit is the name for one who is embued with it; as we say, a poetical and a philosophical spirit. Such a system as this is the thing, which the ministers of religion are holding up to the faith and obedience of the people; and around this all that is called good in the system of the world confederates. The country gentleman applauds it, as a very proper doctrine to be taught the people, and very much respects the well-bred and judicious clergyman who teaches it: the magistrate of the burgh, burdened with the good order of his townsmen, is full of gratitude, that the pulpit should be such an able auxiliary of the police-office. The judges and governors of the land understand and are in perfect sympathy with a religion of this natural and reasonable sort, which none but thieves, and adulterers, and drunkards, and the like enemies of good society, have a right to complain of. The minister and the Bible take their place in the great system of worldliness; and religion is of the world, and the Church is the wedded wife of the world. I declare that this is the religion which I find among Churchmen and Dissenters, from one extremity of this land to the other. It is a system of refined and sanctified worldliness which the world are entirely satisfied with, and will any day turn out to defend. And, O ye ministers of Christ! is this the religion of your Master? and, O ye members of Christ! is this the religion of your Head? Is Christ merely the Head Teacher, God the Head Constable, and the Holy Ghost the Spirit of good society? Is this Christian religion, I ask you, ye angels, ye doctors of the churches, who have a name to live, by sleeking down, and feeding, and courting the dragon spirit of this evil world? Is it for nought that Paul says, "Is any man wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise: for the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God?" that the Lord says, "The cares of this world choke the word?" that the apostle says, "Be not conformed unto this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," and identifieth the course of this "world" with the "prince of the power of the air," and calleth the devil "its god." O false and treasonable prophets! why speak ye not out for the truth, that God is in all Christians, working their works and speaking their words,—even that God of whom

is nothing in the world; that we become fit for His habitation only through Christ uniting us to Himself, and putting in us that life which is contrary to, and the death of, the fleshly or natural man, with his wisdom and his way; and that the Holy Ghost worketh both the life of Christ in us and the power of the Father; and that from first to last the life of a Christian is not natural, but supernatural; not ordinary, but extraordinary; not within the reach of human power, but above it and beyond it, only through the miraculous power of God. The reason why many do not deliver themselves of the truth of this matter, is that they do not believe it. Such, according to the Word of God, are properly named unbelievers, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their mind. Others there are who do not know it, and therefore are not as yet to be classed with unbelievers. And wherefore do they not know it? because they are not honouring God only in their hearts, but preferring to Him some other object, most frequently the *approved* system, or the *approved* persons, or something which man hath approved. And a good many there be who both knowing and believing it, do yet follow flattering courses, because they are afraid of the world's scorn and persecution, nor speak boldly out the truth, which God hath made them to know and believe. These are they to whom Christ saith, "Fear not man; confess me before men, and I will confess thee before my Father. Be not ashamed of me, and I will not be ashamed of thee." Ah me! how many there are who take credit to themselves for being slow of conviction, and cautious of committing themselves by words, which should be their shame. Why is thy chamber dark at noon-day? Because thou art slow to open the blinds which let in the light. Is that thy honour or thy shame? Why liftest thou not up thy voice aloud when the thief is entering the house? Is that thine honour or thy shame? I also am slow of receiving and uttering truth? And wherefore? Because I am afraid of man. Of this I am ashamed, and I confess it unto my God. Do you likewise, O my brethren, confess your sin of slowness of belief. Remember whether it was with approbation, or disapprobation, that Christ spake, when He said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." The truth should be told to these hangers on between Christ and the world, between a God-confessing, and a God-denying church, that their slowness of conviction springeth from the want of entireness in their heart's affection to God. There is another there besides God. Be it man, or be it woman, be it flesh, or be it the world, or be it the devil of hell, there is another in thy heart besides God. This know and cast out, or else thou shalt never know God, nor have Him with thee. I feel it as certain as Scripture and experience can make me,

that the reason why men are not all filled with the light of Christ, and the power of God, is, because they love the darkness, and will not come to the light, lest their evil deeds should be reproved, which they love, and have not yet made up their mind to part with. What that work of darkness is, I know not: it may be the love of the most beautiful forms of art, of the most perfect forms of reason, of the most finished works of systematic truth; it may be the love of that power over others, which by these means we have attained, of that place and station to which we have been promoted, and for the well filling of which we labour as a life's work: whatever it is, that is a work of darkness wherein God is not first, middle, and ending, which brings ourselves or *our* usefulness, or *our* station, or anything that is *ours* into the question of our duty; and so long as this remains, it will present an effectual barrier to the knowledge and avowal of Christ.

That this is the temptation of the present time, I feel and know, and cannot be mistaken. It is popular applause, the favour of men, the credit of a good name, the genial course of a quiet life, the fear of being branded in public newspapers, the dread of being exposed in religious magazines before the religious world, the love of standing well with those that stand well with the world, of being taken into the sweep and circle of a party; it is shameful cowardice, mean sacrifice of personal dignity, for the approbation of a multitude; in one word, it is the desire of a name to live with religious and respectable people, though we be dead, that hath spell-bound men in the thraldom in which they are so basely holden, which is shutting their eyes to the light, and their hearts to the truth, and sealing their lips to the utterance of words, for the want of which Christ's Church is at her last gasp. God will bless my witness against this abomination as base as the papacy; therefore I have lifted up my voice boldly and strongly against it, and will now lay out in conclusion the consummate blessedness of standing stedfast and true in the midst of it all.

"The Father and His angels" are the court above, the heavenly King and His heavenly powers, before whom Christ promiseth to confess the name of every one, who hath confessed Him, before the kings and potentates of the earth, and for that confession is content to lose his name, and have it cast out. To those who are not afraid of reproaches for God's sake, but give their hearts, as Christ did, to be broken by the reproaches of them who reproach God, He giveth the congenial reward of gaining a name of renown in heaven, and having the public entrance into the presence chamber of the great King, and of all the celestial hierarchy. Of whose numbers and glorious array, as they come forth harnessed against these

deceivers of the earth, if ye would have the account, hear it as it was seen by Daniel the prophet: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. vii. 9, 10.) To this glorious company, behold how He, who manifested the name of God, and made it glorious in the world, is introduced as the first fruits of our introduction to the same presence chamber of Omnipotence: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (vers. 13, 14.) Again, if we would have the same glorious presentation and acknowledgment as it was in the ascension, the picture of what shall be, when we have our assumption into the cloud of the Father's glory, it is thus written in the 68th Psalm: first, of the glory of the court and company to which He ascended: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place," (ver. 17.) Then of the triumphant welcome and glorious reward of the ascended Christ: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them," (ver. 18.) Again, if we would know the respective parts which these angels of the Father will do for the evil and for the good, in the end of the world, or consummation of this age, they are written severally in the 13th and 24th chapters of the Gospel by Matthew. And if we would behold the honour and glory of their estate, we have it represented in the four living creatures, and the twenty-four crowned elders, in the 4th and 5th chapters of the Apocalypse, with the ministry of angels all around; and if we would have their blessedness and joy in the company of the Lamb, we have it in the white-robed and palm-bearing ones of the 7th chapter; and if we would have their glorious action, it is to be found in the 19th; and their supremacy of the earthly things in the 20th: but if we would have the full mystery of their glory and blessedness displayed, it is in the New Jerusalem, at whose gates, the place of service and despatch, stand twelve angels ready to go forth with orders from the city of the great King.

The present servants and ministers of God are the angels: they wait upon His throne in the heavens, and are by Him employed in their several dignities to carry on the administration of His government, and they are sent by Him also, on errands of service, to those who shall be the heirs of salvation. Yet they, even they, were created by Christ, who, when He would take into union with Himself a creature's nature, through which to manifest Himself for ever to all the creatures whom He had made, assumed not theirs but ours, as being in the purpose and counsel of God the fittest for that noble end. And so He stamped the nature of man, to be the royal and supreme form of creature-being; and having perfected that nature, according to the intention of its Creator, He ascended up on high as man, and as man, "in man" (Psalm lxviii. 18, *margin*) received the gifts of the seven Spirits of God and rebellious men also, with which to construct a house and habitation for the Most High,—God determining to have His habitation not in any body of angels, but in a body of men, whom to that end He giveth to Christ, like rough unhewn stones from the quarry, that He may quicken them with His own life, and fashion them according to His own mould, and build them into a temple where Jehovah might for ever dwell, and thence put forth the word of His wisdom, and the strength of His power over all things visible and invisible. When the New Jerusalem is thus builded up, the angels take their station at the gates, to go forth on errands from the house and tabernacle of God. And even now, we weak and silly churchmen, do give to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, continual lessons upon the manifold wisdom of God, (Eph. iii.) And into the things with which we are conversant, they do continually stoop down from heaven to look into them and learn, (1 Peter i.) But, because the time to glorify the Church is not yet come, albeit she hath virtually received her glory in her Head, who is far advanced above every name in heaven and in earth; when Christ would speak to His servants on earth concerning honour, He speaketh of mentioning their names before the holy angels as being the present depositaries of the power of God, and the dignitaries and functionaries of the heavenly region, well worthy to compensate us by their acceptance for the rejection of our names by the dignitaries and functionaries of this world, whose god is the prince of darkness. Yet this He doth without any prejudice to our future elevation above them into the higher dignity of bearing up the throne, containing the presence and putting forth the strength of God; and being the body of Christ, who is the fulness of the Godhead. For as there are "earthly things," so also are there "heavenly things;" and as there are "earthly bodies," so are there "heavenly bodies;" and as there is "one glory of the earthly," so is

there "another glory of the heavenly;" and as it is not to be doubted that the Jews in their regenerate state, having the washing of regeneration, and the law on their hearts written, are to be the royal priesthood over the earthly things; so is it certain that the Church, the body of Christ, will rise in the likeness of His glory, and as His bride, have the supremacy and sovereignty, the royal priesthood over the heavenly things; principalities, powers, and dominions, and every name that is named both in this world and in that which is to come, being put under the feet of that body whereof Christ is the head, and the Church the members. Yet as Christ's glory is depicted in the Old Testament by the way in which He is presented and accepted, and rewarded with pre-eminence of place in the glorious assembly of the heavenly host, so also in the New Testament doth He hold out to His Church the hope of the same preferment and glory.

Now for any one rightly to apprehend the exceeding grace and excellence of this promise of Christ, he must bear in mind what God is, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who chargeth His angels with folly; and of what kind we creatures are, whose foundation is in the dust, rebels, enemies of God, doomed for our sin to the presence chamber of the worm, and the bed of corruption. And we must remember how we have been driven forth of paradise into this fallen and miserable world; and that we are no better than animated clods of the valley, filled with all ungodliness and wickedness; Satan's thralls, hell's victims, God's deceivers, His troublers, the most ungrateful and wicked of all His creatures. To obtain for such creatures admission into the heavenly presence, to bring them from the banqueting house of the worm and corruption's couch, to make them clean, to purify and sanctify them, and bring them into the presence of God and His angels: moreover, to take away their heart-hatred, and give them a heart-love of God; their mortal darkness and weakness to expel, and to make them sons of light and strength; to bend and incline their will, to take away their innate rebellion against God and hatred of one another, to harmonize them into one, to build them up into glorious beauty, to furnish them with powers and faculties, and in all ways to qualify them for being Godhead's palace and throne, and chamber councillors, and faithful kings; His royal priesthood over all creation. Whoever will think of this, and weigh it well, will understand both the grace and the love and the power of Christ, the dignity and honour and superlative preferment of the Church. These things are too high for me: even now I can go no further. My heart is sick with thought and admiration. O my God! what a prize is this to think for, to act for, to speak for. Away, away far

from me the fear of man: cease, cease for ever from the applause of men, O my soul!

CONCLUSION.

And thus have I done my endeavour to open and unfold to the Church of God, the disease, the peril, and the cure of nominalism, which now threatens to sink the Protestant Church. I have had upon my mind father, and brothers, and kindred, native country, and mother Church, and whatever is dear to the natural or to the spiritual man. I have written as in the presence of the Heart-Searcher, with much prayer and painful thought; and I have received into my own soul much light and consolation. And I have been called upon to act the thing which I have written, and to stand for the canons of our Lord, and to deny myself to the love and fellowship of brethren for my faithfulness to Him. And I am prepared to do and to suffer much more for Him who died for me. Much of what I have written under this epistle I have addressed to the Church of Scotland, whose responsible servant I am, and through her to all the Protestant Churches. The Lord, in the meantime, hath enlarged my heart with love, and opened my mouth with intercession for her. She will have to take the van in the approaching battle, as she did from the seventh till the eleventh century, when no Church in Europe was found to peep or to mutter against the Bishop of Rome; and she will have to beat down the fabric of that infidelity which her Humes and her Smiths have had a chief hand in setting up, as she beat down the fabric of the Papacy, and ground it into powder. When I say *she*, I mean her children, some ones that have come out of her loins, or rather out of her laver of regeneration. I wish I could see that the whole Church would hold fast her integrity, and stand up the champion of the faith: but, whatever I may desire, I have no conviction to this effect, but rather to the contrary. But it is not good

"To cast the fashion of uncertain evil."

May the Lord fulfil every good work of His servants, and avert all the evil which our sins have deserved. Amen.

SONNETS.

I.—THE ADVENT. (Rev. i. 7.)

Behold, He comes, with glorious clouds reveal'd,
  He who erewhile for man's salvation died
  On the accursed tree. Now far and wide
The vault of heav'n, which then in dark was seal'd,
Shines with His glory. Hark! the trumpet peal'd
  His near approach! His saints have cast aside
  The searcloth of the grave, and as His bride
Have met Him. The nations all, with fear congeal'd,
  Look conscience-stricken on; for they in arms
Confed'rate are against the Lord's Anointed,
  Who thus in judgment comes with dread alarms
Upon a world with thunderbolts disjointed.
  To those who pierced Him, all abroad His arms
He flings, and Zion owns Him King appointed.

II.—THE SEER. (Rev. i. 9, 10.)

In Patmos' lonely isle, where Cæsar's nod
  Sent those he fear'd, in exile from their own,
  I, John, your brother, in the churches known
For faithful witness to the word of God,
In patient solitude had mine abode:
  For Cæsar fear'd the truth which I had sown,
  And deem'd the Gospel warr'd against his throne;
Nor knew that Shiloh's sceptre is a peaceful rod.
  There, dwelling all apart with God alone,
In purpose bent to keep our holy day,
  On which o'er death the Lord victorious shone,
Rapt in the Spirit's mood from sense away,
  I heard behind me, with a trumpet tone,
A mighty voice, which in mine ear did say:—

III.—THE ANNUNCIATION. (Rev. i. 8, 10.)

I AM the Alpha and the Omega;
The all-informing Word, who doth reveal
The unknown God. I am creation's Seal,
End and Beginning; where the Father saw
His purpose all complete. I gave the law
To all creation, and watch o'er its weal,
Hold up its being, and its troubles heal.
Mine is that dreadful name, JEHOVAH-JAH;
First, Last, which Is, which Was, which is To Come;
The Father's style, the Godhead's proper name.
Almighty, I the Godhead's Fulness sum
Within myself. All power in heaven I claim;
Wide o'er the earth I rule the busy hum
Of men; and restless powers of darkness tame.

IV.—THE VISION. (Rev. i. 12–17.)

THE trumpet-voice which thus announced my Lord
I turn'd to see, when, lo! the Son of man!
Whose right hand in its grasp seven stars did span;
And from His mouth a sharp two-edged sword
Went forth, meet emblem of His piercing word.
But who those feet of glowing brass might scan,
Those searching eyes, whose beams like lightnings ran,
And face from which meridian splendours pour'd?
Around Him stood seven candlesticks of gold;
His head and hairs were pure as virgin snow;
The High Priest's robe and girdle Him enfold.
His voice was strong, and liquid, as the flow
Of many waters. Death-like fear seized hold
Upon my strength, and much I dreaded woe.

V.—THE SEER'S COMMISSION. (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

AND at His feet I fell, like one o'ercast
With death's dark shadow; when His gracious hand
He reach'd forth, and strengthen'd me to stand;
And gently said, Fear not! (as in days past
When on His breast I leant,) The First, The Last,
Behold in Me, whom hell's confed'rate band
Could not retain within their gloomy land;
Death and the grave I spoil'd, and all aghast
Have led them captive in: wherefore now in heaven
I reign as God, the Prince of endless life.
These visions of that glory to me given
For having vanquish'd in that mortal strife,
Write thou, and send unto the Churches Seven,
My number'd saints, my death-betrothed wife.

VI.—THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP. (REV. ii. 1.)

I AM the One High Priest and only Head
Of my own Church; the Shepherd of the fold;
Who walk amidst the candlesticks of gold,
Their brightness to preserve, their lamps to feed
With holy oil, and in each time of need
To tend those lights o' th' world, which high uphold
Hope's day-star, midst the storms and darkness cold
Of this lost earth, to save a righteous seed:
The Universal Bishop, Sovereign Lord
Of Church dominion; in whose hand
Lie side by side the angels of the word
In equal eminence of high command
And hidden power, by whom in sweet accord
I teach and rule my Church o'er every land.

VII.—THE BISHOP'S SEVEN CHARGES TO HIS ANGELS—FIRST CHARGE OF LOVE. (REV. ii. 2-7.)

HEAR then! ye angels of the churches, hear
My charge. First, last, of all your thoughts, be love
Unto those sheep, whom I preferr'd above
Heaven's state: They to my Father's heart are near
Who Me do love the most, because more dear
I lovèd them than life. My turtle-dove
Oh leave not to the vultures wild, which rove
The heavens; nor to the snare, the pit, the fear.
Aye watch. Your work, your patience, well I know,
And, knowing, well reward. He works for me
Who works for them: who aims at them a blow,
Had better far been cast into the sea
With millstone round his neck. Still forward go
In love; and to my throne advanced be.

VIII.—THE SPIRIT'S SEVEN BATTLE WORDS—FIRST BATTLE WORD, PROMISE OF PARADISE. (REV. ii. 10.)

THUS speaks the Spirit to the Churches all,
And to each man who hath an ear to hear:
"Whoso o'ercometh in this fell career
With Pow'rs of earth and hell, which proudly call
My people to the battle, he shall fall
Unvanquish'd, and to his grave shall bear
The martyr's crown—victorious rise, and wear
The palm of Jubilee. Let no fears appal
Christ's fellow-soldiers. Him, your Captain, view
Upon the throne of God; who hath on high
Mansions prepared, and wine o' th' kingdom new
Upon His table set; where never sigh
Is heard, nor sorrow enters. There shall you
With Him abide, and in His bosom lie."

IX.

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. SAMUEL MARTIN, D.D.,
MY VENERABLE GRANDFATHER-IN-LAW,
WHO WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM US IN THE 90TH YEAR OF HIS LIFE, AND THE 68TH OF HIS MINISTRY.

FAREWELL on man's dark journey o'er the deep,
Thou Sire of Sires! whose bow in strength hath stood
These threescore years and ten that thou hast wooed
Men's souls to heaven. In Jesus fallen asleep,
Around thy couch three generations weep,
Rear'd on thy knees with wisdom's heavenly food,
And by thy counsels taught to choose the good;
Who in thy footsteps press up Zion's steep,
To reach that temple, which but now did ope
And let their father in. O'er *his* bier wake
No doleful strain, but high the note of hope
And praise uplift to God, who did him make
A faithful shepherd, of his Church a prop;
And of his seed did faithful shepherds take.

X.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY REVEREND AND BELOVED FRIEND,
THE REV. EDWARD THOMAS VAUGHAN.

AND is our Vaughan gone? he who the toil
Of conflict for the truth did fearless bide;
A standard-bearer, who his foot aside
Did never turn to seek ignoble spoil,
But led the way, and taught us how to foil
The serpent's subtle seed? They could not hide
Their wiles from thee; but in their wounded pride
Hiss'd envious, and 'gainst thee raised turmoil.
Thou wast a churchman of the ancient seed;
A shepherd, who thy care did ne'er abate;
A watchman, who the nation's weal did heed;
Which drew upon thee sons of Belial's hate.
Now thou art ta'en away in time of need,
When darkness thickens round our sinking state!

END OF VOL. I.

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